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Miss Daniel, pinx^t

T. Woolnoth sc^t

M.G.LEWIS.

ZELINDA,

A POEM;

AND

Cardiff Castle,

A DRAMATIC-HISTORICAL SKETCH.

DEDICATED

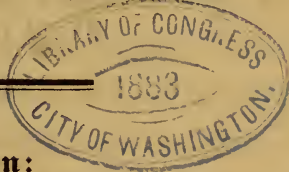
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TO THE MOST NOBLE

THE MARQUIS OF BUTE.

BY M. G. LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF GWENLLEAN, A TALE IN THREE VOLUMES.



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JUST PUBLISHED,
GWENLLEAN, A TALE,
IN THREE VOLS.

BY M.G. LEWIS.

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GWYNNE-ARTHUR,
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IN THREE VOLS.
BY M.G. LEWIS.

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TO THE MOST NOBLE THE
MARQUIS OF BUTE,

&c. &c. &c.

MY LORD,

To you, as the head of a Noble House, and the Representative of a Family, whose name, since the earliest years of my childhood, has been connected in my imagination with every idea of present worth and ancient greatness, I venture to inscribe my very humble work. For the honour conferred on me allow me to return my most grateful acknowledgments ; I know not what the world may think of my production, but, if it meet your Lordship's approbation, and that of my other Noble and generous supporters, much more cannot be desired.

Although it is the fruit of a very young and inexperienced pen, I feel no apprehension in laying it before your Lordship, for, though your critical judgment will easily discover its nu-

DEDICATION.

merous imperfections, your known and acknowledged generosity of sentiment will erase them from memory as soon as they shall have passed from the eye. Presumption and vanity have no share in this action, for though I dedicate an intrinsically insignificant work to your Lordship, it is offered with a feeling of the deepest respect and veneration for the Noble House of Stuart, with such a feeling, My Lord, as, rooted in infancy, will, I am assured, strengthen in maturer years.

To yourself, and to your amiable and Noble Consort, permit me to express my gratitude for the distinction so flatteringly conferred; and allow me to add, that, prouder of the Name which graces the Dedication-page, than of the work which it ushers into public notice, I can receive no higher gratification from this little book than to be considered your Lordship's, and the Marchioness of Bute's,

Most obedient, humble,

and devoted Servant,

MARY G. LEWIS.

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ZELINDA,
A VENETIAN STORY.

BY M. G. LEWIS.

She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies ;

* * * * *
* * * * *

Thus, mellowed to that tender light,
Which Heaven to gaudy day denies,
She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies.
One shade the more—one ray the less—
Had half impaired the nameless grace
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face,—

LORD BYRON.

ERRATA.

Page 8, line 9, for *rag'd* read *raged*.

— 16, — 5, for *combined* read *combined*.

— 41, — 23, for *crept* read *creep*.

— 87, — 6, for *owe* read *own*.

ZELINDA.

LOUD rings the air with joy's resounding peals,
Through every breast unwonted pleasure steals,
Dry'd is the eye where many a day hath stood
The tear of sorrow, swelling to a flood
Of bitter anguish, forced, by maddening pain,
From hearts that deem'd they ne'er could feel again
The thrill of pleasure ;—hushed is ev'ry sigh,
Or turned to notes of sweetest harmony :
This smiling morn gives Isabel the fair
To Prince Lorenzo's son and only heir.
Equal in goodness, beauty, rank, were they,
And happiest on this widely-happy day.

Futurity was hidden from their sight,
And all was one rich scene of vast delight ;
They dream'd not of a pang, a cross, a care,
Guiltless themselves, they thought that others were
As innocent, nor knew (till after-years
Had taught them, 'mid affliction's fruitless tears,)
That man, the child of circumstance and fate,
Might be urged on to deeds of direst hate,
To madness and to death !—With swelling joy
The Prince Lorenzo gazed upon his boy—
His darling, and his hope, (of all beside
Had Heaven deprived him)—gazed with secret pride
Then turned to view the blushing, timid bride. }

Array'd in Nature's living charms, she shone
A being deck'd with graces all her own,
And as the sun's bright rays upon her gleam'd,
And tinged her beauteous form with gold, she seem'd
A thing too pure for earth,—a vision rare,
A seraph, or a sylph,—yet one was *there*
Who dared to claim her for his own,—that one
Alfonzo was, Lorenzo's only son.
They seal'd the promise which their souls approved,
And they were happy,—loving, and beloved.

Yes, they were blest !—for they had but one heart,
Their souls seem'd knit too firmly e'er to part ;
Each was adored by each, they had no thought,
No wish beyond the present, which was fraught
With happiness few mortals e'er can taste,
With bliss too great—too perfect long to last.

Amongst the nymphs, who formed the splendid train
Of lovely Isabel, one damsel came,
Her long dark tresses, and her darker skin,
Betray'd the mixture of her origin ;
A Spanish mother, and a Moorish sire,
Had lent united witchery and fire
To all she said and did ; for, though not fair,
There was a lofty grandeur in her air,
A sportive, playful mockery in her wiles,
And all a woman's softness in her smiles.
Her mother was an Andalusian born,
But, from her friends, her country, kindred, torn,
Borne by a Moorish pirate to the shore
Of Africa,—the young and noble Moor
Alcanzor, saw her—woo'd her to his arms,
And soon possessed the lovely Spaniard's charms.

But what was *Inez now?*—oh *what* was she?
The wife of Andalusia's enemy!
Her country she had forfeited and lost,
And clung more fondly to Alcanzor's coast,
For that was heaven to her, there she had seen
A step as noble, and as proud a mien
As those which graced her native halls and bowers,
When revelry had chased the fleeting hours.

Heaven on their chaste and sacred union smiled,
And blessed them with one loved and lovely child;
Zelinda named. The maiden grew apace,
And emulated soon her mother's grace;
Her father's soul gleamed from her flashing eyes,
But her rich smile, like summer's morning-skies,
Shone more resplendant through the dusky hue
It graced, and thence a brighter radiance drew.
And she was beautiful!—her face display'd
The lovely features of a Spanish maid,
Whilst her complexion's darker hue retain'd
The Moorish tincture, and her birth proclaim'd;
She had a soul as daring as her sire's,
But woman's weakness damp'd its ardent fires,

Mixing rude strength with graceful cowardice,
She seem'd, of Nature's works, the master-piece.

Not long Alcanzor lived—in battle slain—
Inez was left to wretchedness again ;
No hope for her beam'd now on Afric's coast,
Her husband, friend, protector, lover, lost !
That which had seem'd a paradise before
Was now a desart, and a home no more ;
She had but one wish left—to cross the main,
And seek her father's palaces again.

Slaves, bribed by gratitude and gold, consent
To bear her o'er the fickle element,
To guide her safely to her native shore,
To much-loved Andalusia's halls once more.

And now their little vessel stems the tide,
And, wrapped in sweet security, they glide
(Favor'd by night's dark shadow) silently,
O'er the calm surface of the azure sea.
What blissful, visionary raptures swell
The breast of Inez ! Fancy loved to dwell
On scenes the tastes of childhood had esteem'd,
And later years had prized ; the vision gleam'd

Brightly, but too bright long to last—and then
She sunk into her misery again.

But now the vessel cuts the sparkling wave,
And leaves a bright track, where the moon-beams lave,
And Inez' gaze is fixed on those pure skies
Whose stars had deck'd her earthly paradise,
And shed a genial, happy influence o'er
That sacred spot, which she can view no more ;
Whilst dark, and tranquil is the tideless main,
O'er which they wing their flight to fertile Spain.
The morning breaks,—a richer tint is spread
O'er sea and sky,—one deep, enlivening red ;
And as they swim before the gentle gale,
Alarmed, pursuing, they observe a sail !
Suspense they were not doom'd to suffer,—fleet
As arrow from a bow, or vision sweet,
A Turkish Corsair hail'd them, and then bore
Down on the tiny vessel of the moor,
Pounced like the hungry vulture on his prey,
And dragged the unresisting prize away !

Inez was now a captive !—for her child
Alone, she pray'd, and as Zelinda smiled,

Hoping her parent from her griefs to steal,
That smile distracted where it meant to heal ;
For well the trembling, anxious, mother knew
The lawless riots of a pirate crew,
And well she judged that youth, and innocence,
'Gainst tyranny and fraud were no defence ;
Herself she heeded not, for, in that hour,
She knew she could escape the tyrant's power,
Death was an easy opening, but she feared
Her daughter's courage was not so prepared
To meet the blow, and, in th' ignoble strife,
To rid herself or him of hated life.

But Inez' fears were short and vain—Death wound
His icy arms her own sweet form around,
Chill'd her heart's blood, and, whilst her breath he sips,
'Printed his own cold kiss upon her lips ;
One moment saw the mute Zelinda stand
Beside the couch, where Death's benumbing hand
Had blighted every joy,—confused her gaze,
And dimmed awhile her bright eye's quenchless rays ;
The next beheld her madness—heard her rave
At fate, which destined to an early grave

The only one who lov'd her, or was dear
To her, heaven's first and richest blessing here.

But time was not allow'd for grief; the shout
Of war—the clang of arms—the hasty rout
Of numbers to their posts—the horrid din
Of strife without, and mutiny within,
Rous'd every apprehensive nerve, and she
Stood, listening, in dread expectancy.
The contest rag'd till one loud crash proclaim'd
The struggle over, and the vict'ry gain'd;
And then were heard the shrieks of those who fell
Into the deep, with one wild, horrid yell,
Christians and Turks were mingled in the flood,
Whose butcher'd bodies bathed the sea in blood,
And, as their dark, untimely fate they met,
Some call'd on God, and some on Mahomet;
Whilst the succeeding silence told that death
Had claim'd the struggling victim's parting breath,
And all was horror to the shuddering sense
Of the bewildered maiden: woe intense
Sat on her heart, throbb'd in her burning brain,
And froze the life-stream in each curdling vein.

Now the quick rush of footsteps nearer came,
The door flew open, and the sacred name
Of “ *Freedom!*” told Zelinda she was free
From Turkish yoke, and sensual slavery ;
Amazed ! Zelinda hastes to quit her chains,
One tear dropped o’er her mother’s cold remains,
The rest were those of gratitude to heaven,
For aid so quickly, wonderfully given.

A stout Venetian, sent to scour the seas
From foreign foes and daring piracies,
Had mark’d this Turkish corsair as she bore
Gallantly, near the Adriatic shore,
Pursued and conquered, boarded her, and slew
The rebel leaders of the lawless crew.
When days and weeks had slowly linger’d o’er,
The vessel anchor’d on the smiling shore
Of Venice, and the liberated slaves
Danced gladly as they touched their native waves.

Amongst the herd of captive-strangers, sent
As suppliants to the chief, Zelinda went ;
She had no country now, no home, no breast
Whereon her own pierced heart might seek its rest ;

She told her simple sorrow, was believed,
And under Prince Lorenzo's dome received.
Within the noble palace of the Prince,
(Where pomp and wealth display'd his eminence
In power) a silent prey to filial grief,
Dwelt Isabella, daughter to a chief
Of famed Almanza's ancient race, but sent,
For some state crime, to endless banishment.
In youth the Prince had been her father's friend,
And though, in human life, most friendships end
When sorrows are beginning, he was still
Friend to them both; affliction's cup might fill
E'en to o'erflowing, but Lorenzo ne'er
Turned from the object of his soothing care.

Earnestly Isabel had pray'd to share
Her father's cheerless exile, but to bear
This blooming flower into desert wilds,
And unknown lands, perhaps to catch his child's
Last fainting breath, when misery had bent
Her angel form, and driven sweet content
From that fair brow, whose purity express'd
The heaven-like calmness of her purer breast,
Were madness!—No, Lorenzo's word was given,
Which pledged her safety, to himself and heaven.

But time had pass'd, and years had travell'd o'er,
Since that which drove Almanza from the shore
Of his lov'd country to a foreign strand,
When, as his light bark moved, his native land
Seem'd doubly dear to him, because he ne'er
Could touch its shores again.—The deep despair,
The unresisted anguish, which had preyed
Upon the heart of Isabel, and made
Its havoc on her frame, had dimmed her eye,
Stolen from her cheek the rose's brilliancy,
All, and much more, time's efficacious balm
Had almost heal'd; and now, resigned and calm,
Obedient to heaven's just decree,
She bore her sorrows nobly, patiently.

Fame said, indeed, that frequent letters, news,
And messages, and secret interviews,
Now pass'd between Almanza and his child;
But these reports, improbable and wild,
Were credited by few, for none could think
That he would rush upon destruction's brink,
Thus openly invite his enemies
To wreak their vengeance upon him and his:
For the stern mandate, which had bade him flee
From all he loved and prized in Italy,

Also enjoined that he should ne'er again
Dare to approach his native shore, on pain
Of forfeiting that life which now was spared.
(For his past services a meet reward !)

There was another cause (more wisely guessed)
To calm the deep affliction of her breast,
It was the fond, the unremitted care,
The kind solicitude, the ardent pray'r
Breathed for her comfort,—the soft look which told
More than his language had yet dared unfold,
The cheering smile, the sympathy of soul,
The true devotedness of heart, which stole
Over her mind in secret reverie,
And placed *Alfonzo* at her feet.—That he
Should love her was a thing unlooked-for,—ne'er
Had she presumed to think *Lorenzo's* heir
Would wed a being linked to foul disgrace,
But then his words with such a tender grace,
And such respectful fondness, were express'd,
She could not doubt the tale his looks confess'd.
Thus were their pure hearts woven into one,
Whilst, to complete the happiness begun,
The prince *Lorenzo* did not disapprove,
But rather smiled upon their growing love.

He knew Alfonzo's manliness of mind,
He knew the many virtues which combined
To deck the soul and form of Isabel,
He also knew 'twere vain to break the spell
Which bound his son's young hopes to her for ever,
And did not try their faithful hearts to sever.

About the person of this beauteous maid
The Moorish girl was placed. Her eye betrayed,
As darkly gleamed its flashing rays, that she
Felt deeply this degrading slavery ;
Wait on another's pleasure ! humbly bow
Before another's shrine ! she—who, till now,
Had reigned a *princess* in her *native* lands,
Must serve a soft Italian girl's commands !
Humiliating state !—Zelinda's soul,
Haughty and fierce, had spurn'd the just controul
Of those who should have tamed her youth, and bent
Her temper to a milder temperament,
And ill could brook the name of servitude,
But then her soul, though lofty, was endued
With genuine principles of gratitude. }

She felt that to Lorenzo she owed all
The comfort she enjoy'd ; the portion small

Made not the gift less precious, he had done
For her, all that his power could do for one
Whom fate had rendered friendless, and alone,
Upon the world's wide space ; a being known
To suffering and trial. He could not
Restore her to that bright and happy lot,
Which seemed in youth the promise of her age,
And taught her venturous spirit to engage
In all that was most great and dignified,
That raised her emulation or her pride.
He had protected, succoured her, and soothed
The bitterness of grief, he too had smoothed
Her future path through life, if that could be
Cheer'd by the voice of human kindness. He
Had no power o'er the dead, he could not bring
Those spirits back to earth, whose Ariel-wing
Had borne them to a higher, happier home,
And would not, if he could, have changed their doom.
Yet he had done all that a generous mind
Could prompt, when power and willingness combined :
Of all that she possessed he was the giver,
And therefore claimed her services for ever.

Thus was her haughty spirit reconciled
To Fate's unchangeable decree. Though wild

And stormy were her passions, she was yet
A woman in her heart, and when she met
The soft look, and the gentle, kindly tone,
Which spoke of comfort, told her that, alone,
She was not singled by adversity,
And, being a sister in misfortune, she
Had fellow-feeling for another's pain,
She felt their balm relieve her aching brain,
And still more aching heart; for she had ne'er
Vented her grief, but locked in proud despair,
Had haughtily resolved that her pent heart
Should break, before its sorrows she'd impart
To seek for comfort, ask for sympathy,
From the cold breast of chill'd humanity.
She could not condescend to make it known
That human ills had vexed her, or to own
That she was subject to the common tide
Of human feelings; she was one whose pride
Refused that solace, which the gentle heart
Can best receive as well as best impart.

Such was she in her hour of gloom,—*that* o'er,
Anger, and scorn, and pride, were hers no more,
And she, who lately seemed a being steel'd,
In all her sex's softness stood revealed:

Then might you mould her to the gentlest form
That ever woman wore. The young, and warm,
And tender heart of Isabel, obey'd
Nature's sweet impulse, and the cheering aid
Of Friendship's, and Affection's powers combined,
To ease the sorrows of the stranger's mind.

It seemed young Isabel's peculiar power
To soothe the rancour of affliction's hour,
To still the tumult of intruding woes,
And lull all sorrows to a sweet repose.
Oh ! few possessed, like her, the heavenly art
Of easing anguish in another's heart,
For whilst her own breast nursed its secret grief,
She still spoke consolation and relief:
Not unsuccessful was her kind endeavour,
It won Zelinda's gratitude for ever,
And, though her situation was not cured,
She found 'twas not so hard to be endured.

Thus was the haughty to the mild allied,
And both in bonds of generous friendship tied,
The proud Zelinda's sorrows lighter grew,
Whilst Isabel's assumed a softer hue,

And mingling hearts, souls, sentiments, and grief,
They find the union yield a sweet relief,
Such might the ministry of saints bestow
On the afflicted, saddened child of woe.

Now two short years had rolled themselves away,
Full of life's usual changes, since the day
Which gave Zelinda to the prince's care,
Who chased her sorrows, calmed her wild despair,
And bright-eyed Hope had stationed in their breasts
Friendship and Peace, the bosom's wandering guests,
When came a cloud surpassing former woes,
Which tintured life with anguish to its close.

That warm affection,—ripened into love,
Which makes two hearts by one fond impulse move,
And long had held, in undisputed chains,
The souls of these young lovers,—now remains
But to be ratified by holier ties
Than Love *alone* can lend his votaries.
And now the shout of revelry,—the song
Of cheerful mirth, the gay and happy throng,
Whom Prince Lorenzo's courtesy invites,
To witness young Alfonso's nuptial rites.

The strains of native minstrelsy which rise
Through the domed edifice,—the beaming eyes
Of lovely ladies,—the Cavaliers' dress,
In all its proud Venetian costliness :
The blaze of beauty—and the sparkling glare
Of the high company,—the gallant air
Of all the young nobility—the great,
And princely splendour of Lorenzo's state ;
The mazy dance—the ornamented hall,
With other brilliance of the festival—
Mingling, and floating on the ear and eye,
Seem neither more nor less, beneath the sky,
Than the enchantment of some fairy sprite,
Who, in a freak of fondness, spreads delight,
Conjured by all the spells of fairy-power,
Before the minion of her lavish hour.

But 'twas no fairy-influence that sway'd
The breasts of the young pair,—*their* hearts were made
In Nature's finest mould and they were blest
For mid the *happy* they were *happiest*.

It is not magic spell that binds the soul
In love's soft, irresistible controul,

That melts the stern heart—smooths the sullen brow—
And bids the high and lofty spirit bow
Before its idol's shrine,—it is a flame
Kindled at Heaven's own altar, and the same
Which God ordained to form our happiness,
In this dark world of woe, but not the less
It often makes our deepest, dire distress.

}

Amongst these cheerful hearts—these careless smiles,
Enjoyment's wreathed steps—and Pleasure's wiles,
These sparkling orbs—these lovely brows, serene—
And all the courtly splendour of the scene,
You would not think that passions, base as hell,
And vile as those we may conceive to dwell
Within a demon's breast, had entrance found,
To taint with vice this spot of sacred ground.

There was an eye that watch'd—a soul that grieved—
A breast which love and disappointment heaved—
A heart where trembling agitation hung,
And where the Darkness of Despair had flung
Its sable curtain, shutting out the light
Of hope and heaven, and expelling quite
All rays of goodness, all remains of truth,
Which form the chief attraction of our youth.

It was Zelinda—miserable maid !
By love to grief—by grief to crime betrayed,
Who nursed within her young, and once pure breast,
A demon to destroy her future rest.
She long had loved Alfonzo—long had striven
To sever from her heart his form of heaven,
For well she knew the high Venetian's pride
Would never woo a slave to be his bride ;
But passion deep and warm, and violent
As that which in Zelinda's heart was pent,
Which mars her peace, and dims her sleepless orbs,
Or in short dreams of bliss her soul absorbs,
Is not to be restrained by earthly laws
Of station or of birth. She knew no cause
Why the devoted heart, which fondly hung
On the sweet accents that it loved, and clung
Faithfully to its idol, should be deem'd
Unworthy the regard it most esteem'd.
She felt her passion to be chaste and pure,
Ambitionless though fervent ;—she was sure
That none could love him better, yet she tried,
With all the dignity of maiden pride,
To tear that passion from her breast, and fling
The thought from memory ; but love would bring.

His image back array'd in every grace,
And every wonted charm, then fondly trace
Each rare perfection of his god-like form,
Each manly virtue of that heart, whose warm
And generous feelings ever prompted him
To deeds of excellence ;—no selfish whim,
No sordid passion held him in controul,
Nor soiled the native candour of his soul ;
He was as Nature made him, open, free,
Suspicionless of harm or treachery,
But, being unskilled to cheat, he wrongly deem'd
That other hearts were also what they seem'd.
To be exalted, noble, young, and brave,
Was not sufficient ; Nature also gave
A form, whose dazzling beauty shone above
All other earthly forms, inspiring love,
And passion, and esteem, and confidence,
In those around him ; then the manly sense
Which guided every action, the refined,
But natural, graces of his polished mind,
The ready smile which courtesy bestows,
The kind attention paid to others' woes,
And all the little nameless arts which bind
Another as your slave, in him combined

To win the soul of woman, to delight
Her senses, and to charm her raptured sight.

Such was the being formed to be the bane
Of poor Zelinda's peace—her endless pain.
With such an object to contemplate, how
Could she remember that a sacred vow
Would shortly bind him to another? He
Was all that earth could bribe her with, and she
Adored him e'en to madness. When the heat
Of summer lured him to some cool retreat,
And his exhausted limbs were idly laid,
To taste the balmy freshness of the shade,
Within a grot, a bower, or lonely cell,
Where solitude and contemplation dwell,
And o'er his wearied eye-lids gentle sleep
Had shed its soothing influence, she would creep
To watch his slumbering form, as it reposed,
Gracefully, on its couch of earth composed,
And there, with all a woman's fondness, gaze
Upon the Evil Star of future days.

Whilst tranquilly he lay, and still as death,
Oh! she would hang upon his scarce-drawn breath,

And catch his sighs, as softly they arose,
Without awakening that calm repose
His tired frame enjoyed ; but if he chanced
To move the least, whilst thus she stood entranced,
Gently, but instantaneous, she withdrew
From recognition, and he never knew
The tears which o'er his slumbers had been poured,
How fondly, nor by whom, he was adored.
But even this indulgence, innocent
And harmless as she thought it, was not meant
To gratify her long—passions will creep
Into the very bosom of our sleep,
Which drive all kindlier feelings from the breast,
And riot, and make hell instead of rest.

At first, indeed, Zelinda only sought
The pleasure to be near him, to add aught
That could increase his comforts, to attend
In all things to his wishes, and to bend
In silent adoration o'er his form,
When every look and action, traced by warm
Though chaste affection, graven on her heart,
Was treasured as if never more to part

From that fair station ; but, too oft allowed,
This innocent indulgence raised a crowd
Of frightful passions in her breast.—To know
That she was nursing seeds of endless woe;
To feel that he, who claimed her every sigh,
Knelt at another's shrine,—was agony
Too great for human patience ; she would bear
These pangs no longer,—all that wild despair,
And jealousy, and madness can inspire,
Raged in her bosom with consuming fire,
And roused her to a desperate deed, (for oft
Will disappointed passion change the soft,
The gentle, nature of our sex to fierce,
Insatiable fury.) She would pierce
His senseless heart, and wring his very soul,
Would tell him that a power beyond controul
Had linked her fate with his, she would disclose
The love, the hopes, the agonies, the throes
She long had cherished for him ; she would tear
The being from his breast who flourished there,
Would dive into futurity, to know
All it contained for her of weal or woe ;
Oh ! she would meet Death's dart in any shape,
Or any hour, so she could but escape

The anguish which now settled on her brain,
And filled her breast with everlasting pain.
Such was her mad resolve, and such had been
Her madder act, but prudence stepp'd between
The thought and deed, and stayed that rash intent,
Which urged the crime to its own punishment.

The gay and smiling morn that rose to bless
Alfonzo and his bride with happiness,
Dawned but to curse Zelinda ; to erase
All seeds of virtue, rectitude, and grace,
From her deluded bosom ;—to inspire
Such dreadful thoughts as set the brain on fire,
And rend the bursting heart,—to seal the whole,
Wide, heart-appalling, ruin of her soul.

She saw their hands united,—she beheld
The mutual pleasure which their bosoms swell'd,
The love-directed glance, that quickly flew
From each to other, open to the view
Of nought but jealousy or love ; she heard
The prayers to bounteous heaven that were preferred,
For their unending, mutual happiness ;
And whilst all other lips were oped to bless

This noble pair with all that *virtue* sheds,
Hers breathed *a curse* upon their guiltless heads.

She saw and heard no more—her soul could not
Support the pangs—the agony of thought
That now assailed her ;—from this scene of bliss
She fled, to plunge into the dark abyss
Of woe, and guilt, and ruin. Near the beach
Of the wide gulf, and far from human reach,
There was a cave, she knew the mazes well
Which led to this sequestered, lonely cell ;
For oft, in happier times, when the red sun
Had sunk, and Luna's course was just begun,
Had she and Isabella wandered o'er
Its secret paths, and gained the silent shore,
And this cool hermitage, or grotto, where,
Gazing on heaven's pale, nightly messenger,
Had hours of sweet tranquillity been spent,
When love was young, and she was innocent.

The shore—the cave—the path—none other knew,
And hither the distracted maiden flew,
To brood in secret sorrow o'er her fate,
And curse her destiny, and nurse her hate.

Oh ! where was friendship now ? and gratitude ?
And woman's love ? and human fortitude ?
And all the better feelings of the heart ?
Which in our wildest grief should ne'er depart
And leave us desolate, without a hope
Of peace or consolation, giving scope
To all the baleful passions, to destroy
Our life's short bliss and every future joy.
Oh ! they were gone for ever ! all that e'er
Adorned her breast was now no longer there ;
Gone, " like the baseless fabric of a dream,"
Whilst dark revenge and passion reigned supreme.
Yes, heaven itself, and immortality,
With every dignified and precious quality,
All happiness below—all hope above,
Were sacrificed to hate—to guilty love.

Stretched on the cold damp earth, the cavern'd floor
Became her bed ;—the struggle now was o'er
Which late had raged within her bosom, there
She lay, a victim to the blank despair
Which fastened on her, chilling ev'ry vein
With death's cold stupor ; whilst the inward pain,
That shot through heart and nerve, subdued her strength,
And gave the wearied soul reprieve, at length,

From its own violence ; but no relief
Could minister to that corroding grief
Which prey'd upon her heart, and settled there,
Turning all future hope to dark despair.
On the bare rock she lay, her hands outspread,
Inanimate, and quiet, but not dead,
Nor senseless, recollection still had power
To torture in that calm but dreadful hour.

And thus passed moments fraught with bitterness,
But heeded not by one whose hopelessness
Had made her dead to all that fate could bring
Again to overwhelm her, or to wring
Her soul with agony. The burning heat
Of the noon hour had passed : this dark retreat,
Which she had chosen as a resting-place,
(Or, rather, as a spot where she could trace
Her sorrows unmolested, for no rest
Can place or scene afford, if not the breast ;)
Secure from observation's prying eye,
Was shaded over with a rock so high,
A grove so thick in front, that not one ray
Of the warm sun could ever find its way
Within the cave ; yet safely you might sit
Where the projecting shadows darkly meet,

And view the wide expanse of land and sea,
That, clad in Nature's mildest dignity,
Lay stretched before you ; but this lonely spot,
Sacred to solitary grief, could not
Have calmed the fury of her rage, and still'd
The mighty tempest which her bosom fill'd.
What then created that effulgence bright,
Which shot across her features, giving light
To every part of her expressive face,
And lending it a more than mortal grace ?
Was it her usual smile ? Oh ! no, that ne'er,
Seducing as it was, possessed the air
Of true sublimity, but this disclosed
An inward beam, a something which composed
Her tired spirits into rest, and threw
Its brilliance o'er her face and bosom too.

She raised her pale cheek from the earth, which now
Assumed the animated, vivid glow
Of strong emotion ; was it deep revenge,
Or resignation wrought this wond'rous change ?
It was a sudden thought, for you might see
'Twas not the bosom's own tranquillity,
But some high passion spreading through her frame,
(And kindling in her eyes a lightning flame,

Which scorch where'er they turn) they now possessed
Usurped dominion o'er her panting breast ;
It was an essence,—drawn from heaven or hell,
Futurity's dark page alone can tell.

The shades of evening had encircled round,
And, in their dubious veil of twilight, bound
The rich tints of the warm Italian sky,
Far as horizon's furthest boundary ;
When, waked to fresh existence by the thought
Which now impelled her course, Zelinda sought
The scene of revelry—the palace. Here
Nought but delight and gaiety appear,
Smiles are on every lip, in every eye
An emblem of the heart's festivity ;
And gazing on that joyous, happy scene,
You'd think that sorrow ne'er could intervene
To blight the buds of promised happiness,
And tinge their future days with wretchedness.

Zelinda mingled in the lively throng,
Joined the light dance, or raised the choral song,
In concert with sweet maiden voices, which
Came o'er the ear in a full stream of rich

And melting melody ; smoothed was her brow,
And every stormy passion silenced now,
Yet you might trace, in this exuberance
Of wild delight, a strange extravagance
Of look and manner, an unreal joy,
Which lit a flame that sparkled in her eye
With a strange fearful meaning, could it be
That hers was all assumed festivity ?
And this thin guise of pleasure meant to hide
Her disappointed love, her wounded pride ?
Or had it a worse source ? Had malice dire,
Kindled within a fierce and quenchless fire,
Which through her eyes emits its burning blaze,
And adds fresh lightning to their scorching rays ?
Zelinda's love, like all her passions, strong,
Had borne her judgment, and her pride, along
The stream of error, whose o'erwhelming tide
Destroys the fragile bark which dares to ride
On its polluted wave : her love was not
A passion pure, with truth and mildness fraught ;
It was a whirlwind, hurricane, a flame
Of conflagration, which, where'er it came,
Spread devastation round, o'erpowering all
That dared oppose its progress, in its fall

Plunging the soul in sin, blasting for ever
All hope in earth and heaven, restoring never
To the lone breast its lost tranquillity,
But giving up to foul iniquity
All the pure graces of the mind, which shed
A living light when other charms are dead.

Yet there's a flame whose purity shall bless
The soul it animates, whose loveliness
Shall add a grace to virtue, whose refined
And noble nature elevates the mind
Above all selfish feelings ; planting there
Passion, and truth, and courage ; which can dare
All for its idol, risk each earthly good
That wealth might offer, or ambition could
Produce to tempt withal : a love like this,
Fervent, and pure as the unfading bliss
Of angels, forms a Paradise for those
Who feel its influence ; the common woes
Of human life are nothing, so they possess
This light of life, this all of happiness.

'Twas such a love—as fervent, and as chaste,
The hapless pair were doomed awhile to taste :

Virtue had blessed their sacred union, and
Their nuptial torch was lit by Love's young hand ;
Innocence smiled upon their vows, yet fate
(Which sometimes marks the guiltless for its hate,
And, when two hearts by mutual faith are plighted,
And in love's fondest, firmest bands united,
Parts them for ever, at one cruel blow
Lays fancy's blissful, brilliant visions low,
Never to smile again), now darkly loured,
And o'er their heads a stream of vengeance poured.

Time passed away. Amid the busy scene
Of pleasure, seldom was Zelinda seen ;
It had no charms for her, the world might fling
Its riches at her feet, they could not bring
Back to her heart the comfort which had flown
For ever from its seat : she was alone
E'en at the festal board, in all the state
And crowd of pomp she still was desolate.
None knew her wanderings, and none dared inquire
The subject of her grief, a restless fire
Which sometimes kindled in her eyes, and threw
Into her countenance the vivid hue

Of feeling unsubdued, was all that e'er
Betrayed the sorrow which she cherished there.

* * * * *

'Twas one of those seducing summer eves
Common in Italy, when fallen leaves
Are scarcely rustled by the zephyr's wing,
Just when the sun's last rays are lingering
On some high tower, or aspiring steep,
And o'er the surface of the silent deep,
A golden image, the reflection bright
Of night's fair goddess, circles into sight ;
Whilst the voiceless breeze creeps silently along,
As though it feared its low and mournful song
Might waken sleeping nature ;—that the scene,
So soul-inspiring, lovely, and serene,
Tempted Alfonzo, when day's glare was o'er,
To tread the lonely and deserted shore.

The moon had half revealed her silvery light,
And o'er the trembling waters cast a bright
And liquid radiance ; whilst the gentle splash
Of undulating waves, that softly dash

O'er the resplendant sands, is all that here
Breaks on the silence of the listening ear,
"Oh! what can match the melancholy sound
Of plaintive billows' gush on pebbly ground,
When thus at eve yon love-star lights the air,
And tells her god once reigned, and brightly, there!"*
When thus is shed that soft and witching light,
Which gilds the bright Italian summer-night.
Wrapped in sweet reveries, Alfonso stray'd
Along the moonlight shore, where softly play'd
The light sea breeze. On fancy's dreams intent,
And heedless how, or where, his course was bent,
He wander'd on, regardless of the hour
Which should have led him to his lady's bower,
And locked in that serenity of mind
Which gilds with joy the days left far behind,
And paints the future in the brightest dye,
To man's expecting, visionary eye,
He gazed upon the scene, so bright, so fair,
And felt Elysium created there.

Still he moved on, he could not break the spell
Which hung upon his senses, nor dispel

* Angus.

The charm which bound his soul; of all that here
Rose to the eye, or stole upon the ear,
He was the only witness, none beside
Enjoy'd the soothing scene. The rippling tide
Now broke upon a rougher ground, the strand
Became less level, and the trackless sand
Was far less smooth; surprised, he gazed around,
And, waking from his dreams of fancy, found
That he was on a strange and distant shore,
Which he had neither seen nor known before!

Lured by the evening's beauty, he had strayed
Far from his princely halls' paternal shade,
And lulled by the scene around him, he had not
Remarked the foreign aspect of the spot;
Yet 'twas but to retrace his steps, to gain
The distant bound'ry of his own domain.

He turned, then paused awhile, to gaze once more
On the bright wave and star-illumin'd shore;
The scene, though new and strange, was beautiful,
And perfectly Italian; it was full
Of rich variety: wild rocks that flung
Their heads into the clouds, the trees which hung

Over the waters, and their branches lave
In the wide Adriatic's glittering wave ;
The sacred solitude which reigned around,
Broken but by the low and distant sound
Of the gondolier's song, that softly crept
O'er the enchanted ear whilst Nature slept,
And the faint splash of oars which cut their way,
Till song, and oar, and wavelet, died away
Into unbroken silence ; threw a charm
Over the scene, so sacred, and so warm,
More like to heaven than earth, that human power
To shine, had *sunk* in this seducing hour.

Alfonzo felt this scene, and lingered o'er
Its charms with fondness, loath to leave the shore ;
His arms were crossed upon his breast, his eye
Fixed on the irradiated canopy,
Of heaven above him, where a thousand springs
Of light, like sparkling gems on Angels' wings,
Spangled the azure vault ; whilst here, and there,
A thin and silvery vapour crossed the fair
And cold face of the moon :—Oh ! such a night
Is seldom given to bless a mortal's sight,

And he who viewed it prized it not the less,
But, feeling, he confessed its loveliness.

And still he lingered on that silent shore,
Enraptured as he stood ; when slowly o'er
His waking sense rose a deep strain of sweet,
Unearthly sounds, whose harmony complete,
And grace, and richness, as it softly stole,
In a bright vision wrapt the listening soul.
At first it seemed the gondolieri's song,
Which, on a night like this, will float along
The calm sea-shore, making the silent air
Appear more silent still, by breathing there
Such strains as sweetest seem when all, beside,
Is hushed to catch the soft notes as they glide.
Alfonzo hung upon that melody,
(His eye cast o'er the broad and glittering sea,
Where sparkling dolphins play, and moon-beams quiver,)
And felt he could have listened thus for ever.
But as it louder swelled, distinct, and plain,
It seemed to him to be a foreign strain
Which he had heard before, though when, or where,
He could not now remember, yet the air

Was sweet, and wild, and plaintive, and it bore
A mystery which he would fain explore,
Whence could the voice proceed ? it was too near
To be the soft chaunt of the gondolier,
Besides, 'twas in a strange and foreign tongue,
(Whilst Tasso's native airs alone they sung)
And had in it a sadness which expressed
The anguish of a lacerated breast.

He had deemed himself alone on that wild strand,
But now his eye glanced o'er the yellow sand,
To catch the form of this mysterious guest,
Who broke upon the evening's sacred rest,
With such sweet harmony ; but not a shade,
A human step, or living form betray'd :
All was so still and calm, the gentle air
The only thing that seemed in motion there—
And thus was he perplexed. Alfonzo stood
Beneath a rock, which towered o'er the flood
In frowning greatness, as he gazed around,
Hoping to catch again the magic sound
Which chained him to the spot, above his head,
On the cliff's pinnacle, the sweet notes play'd.

A steep and narrow path, half overgrown
By moss and briars, perceptible alone
To the keen glance of search or scrutiny,
Now met his anxious and inquiring eye.
He darted up the rock, (no step more fleet)
And penetrates the thickly-fenced retreat
Of the invisible musician, where
A grove of palms formed the first barrier ;
But this he quickly cleared, and crept along,
Still guided onward by the stranger's song,
To where an opening vista led the way
To a dark cavern, which the light of day
Had never entered. Further, to the right,
And now illumined by the moon's pale light,
Rose a small rocky summit bending o'er
The ocean's bosom, and the "sea-girt" shore.
And here Alfonzo paused, fatigued, amazed,
Yet still in doubt, and admiration, gazed
On something which, astonished, he beheld
By the moon's cloudless brilliance half revealed.

Upon the precipice's verge reclined—
Her sable tresses waving in the wind,

Her dark eye melted to a softer hue,
And fixed upon the plain of heavenly blue—
Appeared Zelinda ! at her feet was laid,
Upon the flowery carpet Nature made,
A small Italian lute, the use of which
Fair Isabel had taught. The dark and rich
Effulgence of her dazzling eye was gone,
And there she seem'd a thing so pale and wan,
And yet so beauteous, that to view, unmoved,
A form by heaven created to be loved,
Was not Alfonzo's gift.—She saw him not,
But, wrapped in deep and interesting thought,
Plaintively warbled o'er the deep-blue sea,
The fragment of a Moorish melody ;
A sad and mournful air, yet having power
To calm the sorrows of her heart, and pour
A healing balm into her wounded breast,
And sooth her troubled bosom into rest.

Alfonzo gazed—Oh ! who has never felt,—
As the first time he hath with rapture dwelt
On some angelic being, formed to grace
His own dark world,—the beauties of that face
Crept slowly—warmly—surely, o'er his heart,
And fix a deep and everlasting smart

In his own breast? 'twas so Alfonzo viewed
The goddess of this sacred solitude.

He felt the poison working in his veins,
His heart again enslaved in Beauty's chains,
But striving to shake off the witching spell,
Called up the lovely form of Isabel,
Counted her bright attractions o'er and o'er;
Then wondered he had never felt before,
Though oft beheld, Zelinda's loveliness,
Then grew his virtuous repugnance less
To own her charms, but quickly glanced aside,
And to dispel the passion, vainly tried,
Which now was kindling in his heart.—He turned
Towards the secret path, but passion burned
Fierce in his bosom, and again he took,
As he believed, a last and lingering look
Of the rare graces of that brilliant form,
Which bound his senses in a firm, and warm,
And sudden thralldom,—whose deep influence
Cast a resistless charm o'er every sense;
That look was fatal—he could not withdraw,
A spell hung o'er him, and a secret awe
Mixed with his love, which makes him deeper feel
Its pangs and pleasures, as they quickly steal

Across his beating heart ; Oh ! had he ne'er
Returned to view a form so foul, so fair,
He had indeed been blest !—that glance dissolves
His heart's pure virtue, and its best resolves.

Zelinda turn'd, unconscious, but her eye
Caught his fine form, the true nobility
Of air, which he possessed, no plebian wore,
And could not be mistaken. As the roar
Of surges beating 'gainst the ruffled sand,
Or the loud tempest, sweeping o'er a land
Of smiling beauty, blighting every flower,
Whirling away, at one destructive shower,
All the fair blossoms of the opening spring,
And, by its blasting influence, withering
A golden harvest ;—so appeared the flame
Of wild emotion which disturbed her frame,
A shriek escaped her, an expression strange
Came o'er her countenance, a sudden change
Convulsed her feelings, and her eye was bent
Upon the moving vision, most intent.

Light as the breezes which around her play'd,
From her reclined position sprang the maid,

In strong dismay, "Alfonzo here!" she cried,
"What! is he come my sorrows to deride?
"To plant a deeper anguish in my breast
"Than that which now disturbs my bosom's rest?
"Go—since thy heart can offer no relief,
" 'Tis *cowardly* to *mock* a *woman's* grief;
"Go—and *for ever!* let me ne'er again
"Behold that form, the source of all my pain!
"It is not well, unbidden, thus to pry
"Into a sorrow, veiled from every eye,
"For ever shrouded in a breast which ne'er
"Reveals its agony, its deep despair,
"To man's unpitying, apathetic view—
"Yet pause awhile!—oh! ere you go—to *you*,
"And you *alone*, will I reveal the pangs
"My bosom feels; the misery which hangs
"O'er my seared heart.—Oh! could you know the deep,
"The silent woe, which robs my eyes of sleep,
"And bathes my couch with tears of bitterness,
"E'en you would pity, and condemn me less
"For this confession;—then let pity move
"The heart so inaccessible to love!
"Hear me, Alfonzo! for my brain is wrung
"To agony,—neglected love has stung

“ Deep in this heart !—and, whilst I tell my grief,
“ Know ’tis an anguish dead to all relief,
“ Which prompts me to this wild and dreadful deed,
“ Whence maiden modesty should fain recede.
“ Know ’tis a passion time can ne’er divide,
“ Which hopes not—knows not—feels not—ought beside
“ The bliss or pain of loving ;—’tis a beam
“ Which cheers me in my solitude,—a dream
“ That winds my fancy to a dangerous height,
“ And paints those scenes most exquisitely bright
“ Which I can ne’er enjoy ; Oh ! ’tis a fire
“ That preys upon my heart, whose flames inspire
“ This last rash act :—will not its madness prove
“ How great my sufferings and how deep my love ?

“ *I love thee !*—yes, the scorching words inflame
“ Thy soul with anger, and thy noble frame
“ Shakes with disdain ; I see it in thine eye,
“ Oh ! frown not thus,—in pity let me die
“ Blest with the thought that you at least forgave
“ My sinful love, nor followed to the grave,
“ With scorn or ire, the weak and simple heart,
“ Which loved to its destruction. Let me part
“ From you, at least, in peace, for thou art still
“ My guiding-star, let good betide or ill,

“ But oh ! I rave distractedly,—my brain
“ Burns with the deep intensity of pain ;
“ My senses fleet—this heaving heart will burst,
“ *You love another !*—and I—I—am cursed !”
Stretched at his feet she sunk, and motionless,
And pale, yet lovelier in her helplessness
Than when the glow of health adorned her cheek :
Whilst o’er her prostrate form the moon-beams break
Through the thick foliage, and shed around
A light which makes the sadness more profound.

Astonished—petrified—confused—amazed,
And stirless as the form on which he gazed,
Stood Prince Alfonzo—had he heard aright ?
Had hearing done its office ? or had sight
Deceived him with a short, delusive dream ?
Was it reality ? or did it seem
Such, to abuse him ? Bending o’er her charms,
He raised the lifeless form within his arms.

Her head was pillowed on his breast—her hair
Gracefully floating on the sportive air,
His arm sustained her waist,—her eyes were closed,
Wrapped in insensibility reposed

Her agitated soul ;—oh ! fatal hour,
Which gave his pure heart to the ruthless power
Of a destroying flame, that fiercely glows
In his impassioned breast,—of future woes
Laying foundation : had they never met,
Or never loved, he had been guiltless yet.

And now a long and dangerous pause ensued,
Whilst, in mute extacy, Alfonzo viewed
The being who adored him ; passion thrilled
Quick through his bosom, and emotion filled
His pent and bursting heart.—He was beloved !
Her tears—her agony—her madness—proved
The strength of her affection,—could he view
Her pangs—her passion and not *feel* them too ?
She had adored him long and fervently ;
Though he had loved another, yet had she
Cherished his image still ; the faithful heart—
Which could endure such pangs, and ne'er impart
Its passion to its idol, till its pain
Burst forth in anguish it could not restrain,
Must suffer deeply ! Her distress—her truth—
Her loveliness—her unprotected youth,
Her wild confession—and the senseless state
In which she lay, seeming more desolate

Than otherwise she would,—all, *all* combined
To blind his reason, to distract his mind,
T' inflict a cureless wound within his breast,
And lull his guardian-angel into rest.

He kneels upon the earth,—one arm is thrown
Around her lifeless form; the tender tone,
With which he strives to break the death-like spell
That fastens on her senses, and dispel
The icy coldness of her frame, is such
Would pierce the sleep of death. The gentle touch
With which he holds her to his heart,—the air
Of horrified amaze, and wild despair,
Which marks his countenance, as, bending o'er
Her lovely form, his fiery orbs explore
The depths of that deep trance, whose stillness seems
A dark, eternal sleep;—whilst passion gleams
Vividly in his eyes,—betray th' intense,
The poisonous malady whose influence,
Fatal to youth and virtue, steeps for ever
The soul in crime, to be forgiven never.

“Zelinda! dearest! loveliest! most adored!

“Wake from this dreadful trance! one gentle word

“ Vouchsafe to save me from despair, can I
“ Behold thee thus on my own bosom die,
“ And yet survive ? look up—oh quickly speak,
“ Lest my devoted heart with anguish break,
“ Lest—by my madness—by distraction driven
“ To acts abhorrent in the sight of Heaven,—
“ I leap from that high precipice, and close
“ My life’s short course,—its pleasures and its woes !”
He laid her gently on the rock, then flew
To a clear rivulet, which struck his view
For the first time, near to the caverned glade,
Where its small form in tortuous courses stray’d.

Returning recollection now resumed
Its former functions, a faint colour bloomed
O’er her cold cheek ; her eyes, so darkly bright,
Again beheld the fair and cloudless light
Of a Venetian sky, but quickly sought
An object with a deeper interest fraught :
Alfonzo’s half-receding form. Her gaze
Followed him through the short but devious maze
Which led him to the spring ; the quick surmise
That he was gone for ever, that her sighs,
Her love, her agony, had only raised
A vengeance in his breast, whose fury blazed

O'er her devoted head, now madly rushed
Through her bewildered brain; all hope was crushed
In that tormenting thought, with one wild shriek,
She darted up the rock whose topmost peak
O'erhangs the dreadful gulf.—No hand was near
To save her from destruction, in her ear
Rang the loud curse, the offspring of a mind
Which love—hate—jealousy—conspired to wind
Into delirium,—what then restrained
The meditated plunge, and firmly chained
Her foot upon the rock? what mighty power
Withheld her fate till a more guilty hour,
And gave her to the world again, to blight
The springing blossoms of its chaste delight?
Returning from the small and shallow well,
With the pure medicine, (his cup—a shell)
Flying with love's impatience to the spot
Where he had left his charge, what horror shot
Quick through Alfonzo's heart,—a vision new,
Sudden, and horrible, appalled his view.

On the remotest verge of that high steep,
Awfully bending o'er the trackless deep,
A figure stood, whose mad, disordered air
Displayed the frenzied wildness of despair:

It gazed upon the flood, and did not shrink,
Though it was on the smooth and fenceless brink
Of a most dreadful fate ; no start betrayed
Fear of the graveless death it coveted.
It was a dark but lovely female form,
And not unlike the Goddess of the Storm
Evoking all her ministers, who dwell
In the wild wind—the wave—the boundless cell
Of the rude Tempest-Deity, to aid
The magic spells her potent art had laid.
Once she looked round—Alfonzo recognised
The face he saw, but stunned, and agonised
Almost to frenzy, dared not look on that
To him so dreadful ; chilling horror sat
On his cold limbs, he neither moved nor spoke,
And for a moment nought the silence broke ;
But breath suspended, dumb, and motionless,
With all the real signs of deep distress,
Film on his sight, and horror in his air,
He stood,—a living image of despair.

A short, wild laugh of scorn preceded words
That pierced Alfonzo's ear like flaming swords,

Displaying all the human feelings wound
Up to one climax ; and the dreadful sound
Fell on it like a knell. “ Still,” she exclaimed,
“ Dost thou pursue me ? is not vengeance tamed
“ In thy unfeeling breast ? can’st thou not spare
“ A being driven to error and despair,
“ By thy perverse insensibility ?
“ Great Prince, ’tis worthy of thy dignity
“ Thus to engulf a wretched maid in sin,
“ And blight her hopes when others’ joys begin.
“ Oh ! blind, infatuated fool to own
“ The love my bosom felt ! I might have known
“ That man unjustly scorns the proffered heart
“ That’s his *unasked*, no gratitude has part
“ In his stern composition, he can view
“ Our sex’s sufferings and deride them too !
“ For thee I banished maiden modesty,
“ And passed the bounds of female dignity,
“ To thee disclosed the pangs my bosom swell,
“ But not unblushingly, oh ! if I fell
“ It was with greatness, e’en must *you* confess
“ I fell becomingly, and seemed not less
“ A *woman* in my maddest grief, than ere
“ Urged by rejected passion to despair.

- “ But ah ! you bend before another’s shrine
“ Who cannot love you with a love like mine,
“ She is too mild, too spiritless, and tame,
“ To feel so lasting, or so fierce a flame
“ As that which burns within *my* breast ; could she
“ Follow through perils, famine, slavery,
“ Sustain your drooping spirit, cheer your soul
“ When woes pressed heavily ; could she controul
“ The tempest of affliction, meliorate
“ The pangs of misery, the frowns of fate ?
“ Perhaps her paler cheek, her fairer form,
“ May for awhile thy fickle bosom warm,
“ But these insipid charms will soon decay,
“ And then Alfonzo’s love will fade away
“ Like to a passing dream. Could she inspire
“ True love’s unquenchable and brilliant fire,
“ Then might you see, in vast futurity,
“ Approaching years of fond security ;
“ But ’tis a futile dream, she does not claim
“ That energy which gives to love’s pure flame
“ The spring of action ; where, in her, appears
“ Strength to endure, through long and distant years,
“ Each change that love—life—destiny, may bring,
“ And yet adore with fervour ? but I wring

“ My own sad heart with anguish, your’s I ne’er

“ Expect to penetrate ; yet calmly bear

“ A moment with my weakness, longer, I

“ Will vex thee not, nor any ’neath the sky.

“ Thy vengeance shall be gratified, great Prince,

“ My death will please thee. From this eminence

“ (My foot is on the brink) a single leap

“ Will plunge me in the bosom of the deep,

“ There will the being you refused to save

“ Obtain a hearseless, but a peaceful grave.

“ Now, by my sainted mother’s God, I swear

“ If thou, Alfonzo, dost reject my pray’r,

“ If you refuse in this decisive hour,

“ When o’er me reason has no further power,

“ I will not live to be thy scorn, but seek

“ Relief from this high cliff’s impending peak.

“ I love thee, and without thee life would be

“ To me a scene of changeless misery ;

“ Can’st thou return that love, and pledge thy troth,

“ With thy most binding, sacred, solemn oath ?

“ Or dost thou wish my instant death to see ?

“ One word from you can fix my destiny ?”

Zelinda stood as stands the mountain oak,
Which scarcely bends beneath the thunder-stroke ;
Or as a rock which lightnings vainly sear,
And cannot pierce the thing they're forced to spare :
She stood as one who felt her remedy
(The only one allowed her) was—*to die*.

Yet hers was not the strength of fortitude,
Her mind was not with that bright gift endued ;
It was the calmness of despair, which stole
All consolation from her drooping soul,
And, being reckless of her future fate,
She only felt that she was desolate.

But had you marked the conflict which possessed
Alfonzo's horrified, half-yielding breast,
It ne'er had been forgotten, nor the air
Of anguish unsuppressed which triumphed there ;
A mist o'ergrew his sight, he dared not look
Towards the fatal spot, emotion shook
His frame almost to bursting, and his eye
Turned from the frightful scene instinctively.
A moment—and the victory was complete,
He sunk upon his knee, his bosom beat

High with a feeling new and strange,—yet he
Pledged the required oath most sacredly;
If that be sacred which can free the soul
From Virtue's, Honour's, Truth's, and Heaven's controul,
“Live!” he exclaimed, “Zelinda, loveliest, live!
“And take all that this heart hath power to give,
“Honour, and truth, and constancy”—(but where
Had truth and honour flown? they were not *there*,
Nor any of the purer attributes
Of man, which form the line 'tween him and brutes;
E'en (with an awfully foreboding frown)
His Guardian Spirit from the scene had flown!)
“Live for Alfonzo! hear him breathe the vow
“Which binds his fate with thine for ever, now,
“The wave that buries *thee* beneath the deep
“Consigns *him* also to eternal sleep!”

'Twas not with those pure sentiments that dwell
Only in virtuous hearts, and form a spell
Against temptation, that Alfonzo pressed
A guilty mistress to his guilty breast;
'Twas with the rapture of unholy love,
Which neither God, nor heaven, nor men approve;
And every evening, at the twilight hour,
The lovers met within their secret bower;

For such they were, if the consuming flame
Which burned them merited that sacred name,
Their love was lightning, and the scorching flame
Destroyed heart—innocence—repose—and fame ;

Oh ! early lost ! Oh ! early steeped in sin !
Cursed when your life's sweet joys should but begin !
By a misgoverned, guilty passion driven
From bliss on earth—from future hope in heaven !

And still the meteor blazed,—no coolness grew
Between these loving and devoted two,
Alfonzo's heart was changed—by magic spells
Bound to Zelinda's charms, e'en Isabel's
Pure graces vanished ; her sweet smiles,—her sense,
Were viewed by him with calm indifference,
Yet still he loved—or, rather, he esteemed
Her gentle virtues, and by this he deemed
He paid sufficient homage at that shrine
Which wanted little to become divine.

One eve when hastening to the distant grove,
With all the impetuosity of love,
Eager to meet his guilty paramour,
He passed with caution near the open door

Of Isabel's apartment, stopped and gazed
A moment there. The evening sun-beams blazed
Through the vast chamber, (for it faced the west)
And, shrouded in the calm and peaceful rest
Of virtue, on a couch of richest hue
The princess lay ; her eyes' soft, melting blue,
Involved in sleep's dark labyrinth, was hid
Beneath the snowy whiteness of the lid.
Hers was that deep and gentle slumber which
No evil thoughts disturb ; her soul was rich
In the best gifts of heaven, and you might trace,
Through the sweet lines of that expressive face,
Where youth's pure charms harmoniously combined,
The striking emblem of a purer mind.

Her tresses played upon her neck, the air
Blew the soft ringlets o'er her forehead fair,
Her cheek lay on her hand, whose paleness vied
E'en with the unpolluted lily's pride ;
Her lovely form, more lovely as it shone
In grace unborrowed, and the gentle tone
Of languor that oppressed her, gave the whole
The radiance of a bright and guiltless soul ;
Yet he could leave so fair a thing as this,
To meet pollution's foul and tainted kiss.

He passed on quickly and soon reached the cave,
The fatal, guilty spot, to both the grave
Of innocence and peace ; beneath its shade,
Near the small spring, appeared the dark-eyed maid
Zelinda, with a lover's haste he sprung
From the thick grove whose twining branches hung
In gay luxuriance o'er the path, and met
Her smiles with rapture. When the sun had set,
Seated upon the cliff's high point, a sigh
Stole from Zelinda's bosom, and her eye
First glanced beneath upon the lovely shore,
And then returning slowly wandered o'er
Alfonzo's features, with that marked expression
Which never fails to leave the strong impression
That something's to be asked, or feared, or known,
A feeling understood by fear alone.

" Alfonzo !" she at length exclaimed, " do you
" Believe me faithful to your interests ? true
" In all things to the love so freely given ?
" Frown not,—I know you do—by yon bright heaven
" I'd rather sacrifice my life for thee,
" Than cause one pang of fruitless misery ;
" Yet am I bound, by every tie of love,
" To wring thy bosom and, perhaps, to move

“ Thy nobler feelings to a dreadful deed ;
“ But oh ! let youth and pity intercede,
“ Decide nōt rashly—she may yet be free
“ From guilt’s defacing stain, and I may be
“ Mistaken—” “ Who ?” Alfonso cried, amazed,
Whilst his dark orbs in strict enquiry gazed
Upon Zelinda’s countenance, to trace
Her bosom’s secret in her glowing face ;
“ Pity ?—and love ?—and guilt’s defacing stain !
“ What mean those mad expressions ?—quick, explain
“ To whom—by whom—and why they are applied !”
“ Be calm, my lord,—’tis to thine own fair bride.”
“ Ungrateful woman ! not the powers of hell
“ Can taint the spotless fame of Isabel !
“ She is so pure, in native worth enshrined,
“ That Vice dares not approach her, and her mind
“ Is purer still ; ’tis guilt’s own forgery,
“ A falsehood of the deepest, blackest dye,
“ And thou’rt its victim ! Oh ! can you believe
“ Aught of my Isabel, that does not leave
“ A bright reflection of her virtues ? She
“ Is goodness all ! and truth, and purity !
“ Not the bright silver which adorns that sky
“ Is whiter than her soul ; oh ! not the high

“ And happy spirits, ere from Heaven they fell,
“ More guiltless in intent than Isabel !”
'Twas with the air of one who deeply felt
Some secret, poignant woe (for sorrow dwelt
Visibly on her brow, and, as she turned,
Through a bright liquid gem her dark eyes burned
With shaded lustre,) that Zelinda rose
From the bare rock, and gazed, awhile, on those
Pure regions of eternal, boundless space
Which heaven had spread before her ; yet to trace,
Or think to trace, in the tale-telling eye,
The workings of her soul,—was vanity ;
Grief, calm, and dignified, and woe suppressed,
Was all that seemed to agitate her breast.

At length she turned, and ere he was aware
Fell at his feet ; her mild and placid air
Betrayed no madness in the act, and cried
“ To save thy name and honour I have tried !
“ To ope thy eyes to crimes of darkest hue,
“ But thou’rt incredulous ; and now adieu
“ Great prince for ever ! Oh ! it breaks my heart.
“ To leave thee thus, yet it is time to part
“ Since you distrust me.—Where is now the fond,
“ The heart-felt confidence, which knits the bond

“ ’Tween lovers ? Can you think that I would frame
“ A lie so dreadful ? brand the noble name
“ Of Isabel with infamy, if she
“ From the imputed crime were wholly free ?
“ No ! had a thousand tongues conspired to fix
“ A stain upon her honour, and to mix
“ Her name with slander, I had ne’er believed
“ Their treacherous lies ; but my own heart received,
“ Last night, a proof incontrovertible
“ Of falsehood and deception ;—yet I dwell
“ Tediously on a thing you will not hear,
“ But treat contemptuously,—oh ! may you ne’er
“ Wake from this dream of bliss to know that she,
“ Who would have warned you of the infamy
“ Which hung upon your line, but knew too well
“ The source from which it sprung !—And now farewell !
“ I’ve done what duty prompted me to do,
“ Thou hast contemned my friendly aid ;—on you
“ Alone will rest the stain of that foul shame
“ Which blends with guilt your house’s noble name.”
She spoke—and fled ere he had power to stay
Her agile movement, but the restless prey
Of horror and suspicion, he could find
No consolation for his tortured mind

Until they met again ; for the vile tale,
Used by the artful sorceress to prevail
O'er his ingenuous nature, had too well
Enthralled him in its dark and poisonous spell.

He followed and soon traced her to the spot
Where they were used to meet, the ocean-grot ;
And cried, whilst agitation shook his frame,
“ Tell me Zelinda, by the sacred name
“ Of that you most revere, if you know aught
“ Against the princess ; ease my maddening thought,
“ Disclose her baseness, guilt, and treachery,
“ Let not compassion plead ! the crimson dye
“ Of crimes like hers shall not escape the eye
“ Of injured honour, her hypocrisy
“ Shall meet its just reward—Oh ! to possess
“ Such bliss and *lose* it, passes all distress !”
“ Alfonzo, no ! *once doubted*, e'en to *thee*
“ I will not stoop again ; behold in me
“ A mind too proud to bend to thy caprice,
“ And humour all thy way-ward fantasies.
“ Is this the recompense of so much love ?
“ Such true affection ? dost thou seek to prove
“ Thy gratitude by doubting and distrust ?
“ Ah poor Zelinda e'en *thy* candour must

“ Submit to base suspicion !”—“ Oh, forgive !
“ The hasty words,” Alfonzo cried, “ receive
“ My true contrition, I could ne’er suspect
“ Thy nature of deceit, yet to reject,
“ A moment, the dark truth which sealed my pain
“ Was a relief to my distracted brain.
“ Pardon the rash expression in the heat
“ Of wounded feeling used, and now repeat
“ All that you know to curse me ; let me hear
“ My mighty wrongs at once. Let timid fear
“ Restrain the tongues of cowards,—yours should speak
“ Boldly, and like yourself,—but do not seek
“ To find excuses for the matchless vice
“ Of this deep hypocrite !”—“ Let it suffice,
“ Alfonzo, that I tell thee all I’ve seen,
“ Suspect no further yet. This lovely scene,—
“ Endeared to me by all that’s dear on earth
“ To one so desolate as I, and worth
“ More to my heart than all that pomp can shower
“ Is oft my station, in this peaceful bower
“ I love to muse; last night I lingered here
“ Longer than usual, and the bright and clear
“ Expanse of sea and sky, with mingled light,
“ Threw a refulgence o’er the gloom of night

“ So heavenly, so like the hour we met,
“ I could have lingered to enjoy it yet.
“ Locked in the retrospection of past days
“ I marked not time, and, till the moon’s cold rays
“ Had sunk within its orbit, and withdrawn
“ Their splendour by degrees, knew not that dawn
“ Was so near breaking ; then, amazed, but quick,
“ I hastened from the spot, when through the thick
“ And opaque shadows which precede the light
“ Of day, a dusky figure struck my sight
“ Gliding amongst the trees ; it hastened on,
“ Noiseless but fleet, to yonder bed of stone,
“ And having gained the border of the rill,
“ It paused awhile to mark that all was still ;
“ Then slid within the cave, as though, with ease,
“ It recognized its wild intricacies.

“ Alarm had sent me from the cavern,—there,
“ Where the tall cedar tree spreads high in air,
“ I watched its movements ; the high port displayed,
“ Though wrapped in the impenetrable shade
“ Of its long garments, the commanding mien
“ Of one of noble blood, but dimly seen,

“ Through intervening vapours which the birth
“ Of a new day spread o’er the face of earth,
“ Was soon invisible to sight, and I
“ Lost in a lab’rinth of perplexity,
“ Was hasting from my perilous station, when
“ A small light figure, winding through the glen
“ That lies below the path, appeared in view,
“ Which with a quick, but silent, movement flew
“ Up the ascent, and passed so very near
“ My hiding-place, that, quite distinct and clear,
“ The features I discovered ; they were those
“ Which oft have lulled you into calm repose,
“ And shed such sweetness o’er your slumbering sense,
“ That you have deemed love, truth, and innocence
“ Lay in that glance :—need I add more, to tell
“ The lineaments were those of Isabel ?”

“ Oh ! God, I knew it !—say, what followed next ?

“ Did she behold you ? was there no pretext,

“ No lie—no hell-born falsehood to invent

“ A covering for her infamous intent ?”

“ None—for she saw me not, but gliding by

“ Rushed tow’rd the cave ;—the light’ning of her eye

“ Flashed fearful as she passed me, for it gleamed
“ More brilliantly than usual, and she seemed
“ Bent on a nameless deed. Without the wood,
“ Near the cave’s mouth, the tall dark stranger stood ;
“ A circling zephyr blew his cloak aside,
“ And shewed his form arrayed in all the pride
“ Of a Venetian Lord ; his arms were crossed
“ Thoughtfully o’er his breast, his plumage tossed
“ In majesty above him, and his gait
“ Was all you could conceive of princely state.
“ Soon as his watchful, penetrating eye
“ Beheld the long-expected object nigh,
“ To see was to embrace—with one quick bound
“ He sprang—and clasped her slender form around,
“ She sunk upon his bosom.—But I dare
“ Not tell thee more, that ghastly look,—that air
“ Of settled anguish terrify, that smile,
“ So dark and bitter in its scornful wile,
“ Fills me with horror, if you would indeed
“ Detect her in her crimes, you must proceed
“ By other measures ; a harsh word, a frown,
“ Would only serve to draw more caution down
“ Upon her actions, she would then contrive
“ A thousand schemes to blind you, but connive

“ Awhile, at least, in seeming, ’tis a task
“ Too great I own for friendship’s voice to ask,
“ Yet ’twill as surely bring those deeds to light
“ Which treachery veils at present from your sight.”

“ Torture me not with this suspense,” he cried,
“ But quickly tell me, saw you aught beside ?
“ Where went they ? did they look, or speak, or move,
“ Like those who meet in fear, in secret love ?
“ Quick ! quick unfold the dreadful tale,—the shame,
“ Which soils the lustre of Lorenzo’s fame,
“ Must be wiped out by blood ; no time, nor place,
“ Can shield the author of this vile disgrace
“ From my just vengeance ; by this steel I swear,
“ Here in the front of heaven itself, to spare
“ Age, sex, nor station, for its point shall sever
“ Our ancient name, and infamy, for ever !”

“ Warm greetings o’er, they hastened to the cave
“ Linked fondly arm-in-arm. Eager to save
“ Your trusting honour from abuse, I sought
“ A private path, whose lengthened windings brought
“ My steps so near the grotto, I could view
“ All that might pass within ; their last adieu

“ Alone, I caught : whatever, else, had been
“ The object which allured them to this scene
“ Is undiscovered, for I only heard
“ Their farewell promise and the parting word.
“ They parted as in sorrow, no warm sighs,
“ No flames which speak a lover’s extacies,
“ Expressed their ardent feelings, and the whole
“ Seem’d but the sacred union of soul ;
“ Yet quite impassioned, just as though their hearts,
“ Linked to each other by a thousand arts
“ Which love alone can guess, had spread around them
“ A life whose warmth in Virtue’s cestus bound them.

“ The stranger pressed her to his heart, and bent
“ A moment o’er her, whilst the Princess leant
“ In silence on his bosom, then he caught
“ Her hand once more, and, with emotion fraught,
“ Exclaimed ‘ Forget not, love, thy pledge to meet
“ ‘ Thy dearest friend in this obscure retreat
“ ‘ At the appointed time ; until again
“ ‘ That form shall bless my senses, nought but pain
“ ‘ Will fill my aching breast, oh ! then be true
“ ‘ To this our sweet, but stolen interview.’

“ ‘ Doubt me not,’ Isabella said, ‘ the hour,
“ ‘ Which leads my steps to this sequestered bower,
“ ‘ Will be to me an age of happiness ;
“ ‘ My purpose, fixed in its own stedfastness,
“ ‘ Nought can prevent ; oh ! sooner than forget
“ ‘ To meet thee thus as we to-night have met,
“ ‘ I could forget to live, love, hope, or fear,
“ ‘ For thou to this lorn bosom art more dear
“ ‘ Than all the world can offer me beside,
“ ‘ To swell my vanity, or soothe my pride.’

“ ‘ Angel of comfort !’ he replied, ‘ farewell,
“ ‘ My life’s sole treasure ! gentle Isabel !
“ ‘ The envious day divides us, but the noon
“ ‘ Of night will bring thee here again, a boon
“ ‘ Which heaven in mercy grants to cheer this breast,
“ ‘ So long by Sorrow’s bitter sway oppressed.’

“ And then she named the hour, and fixed the night,
“ Which should restore her to the longing sight
“ Of her expecting guest ; it was the deep
“ And silent time of midnight, locked by sleep
“ In dull forgetfulness, no eyes should wake
“ But theirs, and no rude interruption break

“ Upon their secret conference ; the night
“ Resolved on was to-morrow’s, but the light
“ Of spreading day now warned them to depart,
“ Again the stranger clasped her to his heart,
“ And hung upon her parting words as though
“ His spirit went with her, and he could know
“ Joy, hope, existence, only whilst she stayed,
“ And soothed the anguish which her charms had made.

“ Emerging from the cave a fond adieu
“ Again they took, and then the Princess flew
“ Along the secret avenue, and o’er
“ The rock’s steep mazes and the twilight shore.
“ Enveloped in her mantle, no rude eye
“ Could pierce its foldings ; even calumny
“ Itself dared not attack her spotless fame,
“ Nor profanate the *Princess*’ sacred name.

“ Alfonzo, hear me ! ’tis thy sullied line,
“ Thine injured honour, the polluted shrine
“ Of Hymen, and thy trusting confidence
“ Abused, should rouse thee to the quick defence
“ Of such unequalled wrongs ; oh ! if this pair
“ Are guilty ’twould be cowardice to spare

“ Their crimes a moment ; but let prudence sway
“ Your actions, it is possible that they
“ May yet be innocent, some humble friend,
“ Perhaps, has claimed her services to lend
“ Assistance in distress.”—“ Ah ! do not plant
“ A scorpion in my breast, whose sting will haunt
“ My couch for ever !” cried the wretched Prince,
“ What did that midnight mystery evince
“ But a disgraceful passion ? Gods ! I loved
“ Beyond all human thought,—but she has proved,—
“ She—my best love—my heart’s sole joy—my bliss,
“ Whose smiles I deemed it heaven to possess—
“ Has proved my curse ! Oh ! not my bitterest foe
“ In hour malign could wish increase of woe,
“ Would heap more anguish on this suffering heart,
“ From happiness for ever torn apart !
“ Unsullied must Lorenzo’s name proceed
“ From age to age, no diabolic deed,
“ No shame shall stain the honour of our line,
“ Nor withering weed of infamy entwine
“ With the green laurels of our house, to blast
“ The fame it hath enjoyed for ages past.
“ To-morrow’s eve will bring the guilty pair
“ To yon dark grotto,—I will meet them,—there

“ Avenge my wrongs, no latent spark of love
“ Shall change my purpose, nor have power to move
“ My stern but just resolve ; oh ! thus to feel
“ The maddening sense of degradation steal
“ In strong conviction o’er me, and to know
“ That peace has fled for ever, that, below
“ There is no comfort left, that nought can smooth
“ The roughness of my destiny, nor soothe
“ My fevered brain a moment, is to feel
“ The soul’s deep curse,—a pang which nought can heal !”

His forehead sunk upon his hand, a tear,
(The dew of agony) which seemed to sear
His heart in its descent, (for, when the eye
Of Man weeps, ’tis increase of misery,
And not *relief* of it, such as *we* find
In tears, for the oppressed and anguished mind),
Rolled down his cheek ; and then he paced the ground
With a quick step, and drew his cloak around
His fine form with an air of majesty,
That seemed to speak disdain ; whilst his dark eye
Flashed fire, and a half smile of scorn passed o’er
His lips, then left them livid as before,
With mental anguish ; and the strife within
Spoke through those eyes ; whilst his indignant mien,

Displaying all his pride of soul, expressed
The conflict which disturbed his writhing breast.

“Alfonzo,” said the arch fiend at his side,
In a soft voice, whose ’witching tones might glide
Into the bosom of a saint, and raise
All dormant feelings to the quenchless blaze
Of human passion; whilst the speaking smile,
So full of tenderness, might well beguile
All virtue from his breast; “thy purpose just
“I will not seek to turn, but firmly trust
“That no rash thought, no vein infuriate,
“Will prompt thee to a deed of blood and hate;
“For oh! remember ’tis thy blooming bride
“Thou would’st destroy, then let your rage subside,
“And calm, collected, blinded not by wrath,
“Observe and follow them. The secret path,
“Which stretches from the shore to this dark grot,
“The Princess will pursue, so, take it not,
“Or thou may’st be perceived; but at the hour
“Of midnight, thou shalt see a small flag lower
“Beneath the palace-gardens, ’tis the mark
“Of one who will assist thee; a light bark
“Will be in waiting on the adjacent shore
“To serve thy pleasure, and will waft thee o’er

“ The waters of the gulf ; upon the sand,
“ Below this rock, I’ll wait to see thee land,
“ Then lead thee to the spot, and if I crave
“ Aught in this mediation but to save
“ The honour of your house, may Heaven reserve
“ For crimes so dark the Hell which they deserve !”

“ Oh ! sweet adviser,—guardian angel !—say,
“ How shall I e’er reward thee ? how repay
“ The vast debt which I owe ? to thee alone
“ The shame which rests upon our line is known,
“ With thee will sleep for ever ; oh ! thou art
“ My sole remaining bliss,—my better part ;
“ Counsel like thine ’twere madness to reject,
“ To live—die—strike—forbear—as you direct
“ Alone is left for me, my truth—my love,—
“ My gratitude—let after-actions prove !”

He spoke, and clasped her to his heart, but round
His brows there seemed a fiery circle bound,
Whilst coldness ran through all his veins, and chill’d
The stream within them, and his bosom thrilled
With something like to horror ! Why should such
Unusual awe assail him at the touch

Of one so pure? dispersing his alarms,
He pressed the demon closer in his arms !

* * * * *

The evening came—long ere the moon could reach
Her highest point, Alfonzo sought the beach,
And watched the progress of the waves which lashed
The smooth Italian shore ; and slowly dashed
Their lazy forms upon the sand, or curled
Them into hills, and o'er the white rocks hurled
The sparkling foam ; whilst the reflected sky
Shone in the depths of ocean, and the eye,
Glancing from sea to heaven, might view one bright
And cloudless hemisphere of moving light.

Now on the ocean a dark speck appears,
Increasing in dimension as it nears
The destined strand, and gliding swiftly o'er
The waves which play upon the royal shore,
Whereon the palace rears its haughty crest,
The rower sinks upon his oar to rest ;
A small white flag, the only sail the boat
Can boast of, is allowed awhile to float
High on the passing breeze, then slowly lowered,
Whilst o'er the deep the young gondolier poured

His strain of harmony ; Alfonzo knew
The well-constructed sign, and quickly drew
Near to the vessel ; on its stern appeared
A stranger's figure, yet Alfonzo veered
Not from his purpose, stepping from the shore,
The bark its burthen o'er the light waves bore.

And then the stranger turned, and the dark eyes,
The smile he could not fail to recognise,
Gleamed on him like the radiance of the stars,
Whose brilliance shines 'mid elemental wars ;
For in her face strange feelings were expressed,
And now amaze—and now affright possessed
Her changing countenance, yet still she'd smile,
As though she deemed that effort could beguile
The conflict of her agitated mind.

Her cheek upon Alfonzo's breast reclined,
Her hand fast locked in his, her flashing eye
Riveted on the pure and stainless sky,
They moved along ; the swift gondola flew
Through waves of gold, and jet, and azure-blue ;
And as they floated on the glittering main,
O'er the deep waters rose the pleasing strain
Of those who plied the oars, whilst Tasso's soul
Spoke in their songs, and harmonized the whole.

Their theme was love, they hung upon the name
As though their hearts confessed the piercing flame,
Or thought, perchance, 'twould light the speaking eye
Of their sad guest, and soothe his misery ;
But vain attempt, no human skill had power
To cheer his soul in this distressing hour,
Not all that Tasso ever wrote or sung
Had art to soothe him, a strange sadness hung
O'er all his faculties, his soul was pent
Up in its misery, and nothing lent
Relief or consolation to that mind,
By jealousy, to deeds of hate resigned.

As they approached the shore a horrid sound
Rang o'er the waves, and filled the air around,
And shrieked into their ears ; it seemed to be
The scream of one in mortal agony,
Dying by suffocation,—drowning,—hurled,
Lep'rous and guilty, to a future world ;
'Twas nothing human, and the gurgling throat
Like one in Fate's strong hold,—the wild death-note,
Were most horrific ; the affrighted pair
Looked round, aghast, though they could hardly dare
To glance upon the sea, lest they should meet
Some soul-appalling object ; their hearts beat

In terror, but the vessel touched the strand,
And, springing on the smooth and shining sand,
They trod the rock's steep maze. The prince's breast,
Now by a thousand boding fears oppressed,
Felt all that inward agony of heart
Which, when compelled to act a bitter part
Tow'rd those we fondly love, is ever felt
By the warm soul where passion once hath dwelt.

In silence, deep and awful as the grave,
They climbed the dark ascent, and reached the cave,
And sought a private spot, but scarce revealed
In the broad light of day, and now concealed.
Fired by imaginary wrongs—and bent
On a most dreadful deed, Alfonzo meant
To count the moments, till the guilty pair
Should keep their criminal appointment there ;
He had not waited long ere, through the trees,
Whose waving branches played with every breeze
That danced around them, an advancing form
Was sometimes visible ; Alfonzo, warm
With his revengeful ire, could scarce restrain
His actions, or have patience to remain
Within his dark abode ; for the bare sight
Of the vile wretch, who basely sought to blight

The honour of his lineage, and defame
His house's future nobleness of name,
Wound him almost to frenzy, yet he quelled
The rising tempest, and awhile repelled
The mighty storm, expecting the next hour
Would give the spoiler fully to his power.
And so it proved—for, with a step as hushed
As the south wind, a noble person rushed
Into the cavern, where he paused; the light
Of the moon's rays reflected on his bright
Habiliments, a dagger's gleaming blade,
A soldier's sash and sword were all displayed;
But still his features were concealed, the hue
Of Luna shone not on them, and he drew
His dark cloak o'er him cautiously, to hide
His glaring costume and his figure's pride.
A light step now approached, the stranger sprung
To meet it,—the succeeding moment hung
On the fond breast of him she loved so well,
With equal joy—the Princess Isabel!

Caressed, and clasped within the stranger's arms,
“Oh!” she exclaimed, “what horrors—what alarms
“Have chased me to this spot! and much I dread
“My steps have been observed; the way I fled

“ May easily be traced,—should it be known

“ That I have ventured hither, that, alone,

“ I braved the dangers of the night, and sought

“ This private meeting, will it not be thought

“ My confidence and love were both too small,

“ Or I had trusted to affection all?”

“ Silence these apprehensions, let no fear

“ Disturb our blissful meeting, it is here

“ Alone I know what joy is ;—thus to hold,

“ A form more precious than a mine of gold,

“ To a fond anxious breast, to be assured

“ That time has not effaced thy love, nor lured

“ Thy heart from duty, yields the brightest blaze

“ Of hope, and cheers the gloom of future days,

“ Which long has compassed me ; then why should you

“ Allow the shade of sorrow to imbue

“ Our sacred meeting thus ?” “ Oh ! I am ill

“ At heart, and terrifying visions fill

“ My agitated brain ;—my eyes grow dull,

“ My senses fail,—my wretched breast is full

“ Of strange presentiments,—I faint,—the air

“ Will soon revive me,—lead—oh ! lead me there.”

She sunk upon his arm, he clasped her round,
And bore her quickly to the stream which bound
The cave without. Alfonzo followed—fired,
To deeds of frenzy by revenge inspired,
He drew his poniard—sprung upon his foe—
By instinct tutored to avoid the blow,
The stranger turned, and fiercely strove to gain
The treach'rous blade, but ere he could restrain
Its high-raised point, the murdering weapon fell,
And pierced the guiltless breast of Isabel !

“ Foiled in my purpose ? ” shrieked Alfonzo, “ no !

“ Dastard, and villain, know me for thy foe !

“ I am Alfonzo—Oh ! I blush to tell

“ The tie which binds me to that devil !—Hell

“ Had her reward in store, 'twas not my aim

“ To send her there so soon,—but *thou* shalt claim

“ Small mercy from an injured husband's arm ! ”

He drew the reeking steel from its yet warm

And pure abode, when a strong grasp withheld

His hand, and, turning, he at once beheld

The stranger's face ; oh, God ! he recognized

Those features, and amazed, and paralysed,

He deemed some fiend had conjured up the light
Which gave *Almanza* to his tortured sight !

The crimson tide gushed forth—the father sprung
Close to his bleeding child, and wildly hung
Over her form ; her dying orbs unclosed,
And full of angel-sweetness were reposed
Awhile upon her sire, and then she tried
To speak his name, but utterance was denied :
A deep low groan, foretelling speedy death,
Convulsed at intervals her quivering breath.

Whilst with a supernatural grasp she held
Her father's hand, her wandering eye beheld
The prince's figure ; crimsoned with the blood
Of innocence, aghast Alfonso stood,
And gazed upon the havoc he had wrought,
But scarce believed his sight ; whilst madd'ning thought,
And dreadful doubts, and strong conviction, tore
His anguished breast till reason was no more.

His piercing eye-balls strained—his brows half raised
In horror, and the hue of death which glazed

Those orbs of flame, the severed lips bereft
Of colour, and an ashy whiteness left,
His form contracted, whilst his hand still clasped
The instrument of death, and firmly grasped
Its weltering blade ;—all struck upon her sight
At one quick glance, and horror and affright
Loosed the chill bonds of death, the princess spoke,
But first a piercing scream of anguish broke
From her pale lips, “ Oh heaven, that form ! ’tis he,—
“ My husband !—plunged in sin and misery,
“ What fiend impelled his hand, to add a curse
“ To his ill-fated destiny ? Oh ! worse
“ To fall thus by the hand which we adore,
“ Than for a thousand enemies to pour
“ Their wrath at once upon the suffering soul !
“ Could no kind friend, no guardian power controul
“ That hand, ere ’twas so deeply stained with gore ?
“ But I forgive thee, prince ! not one word more,
“ Reproachful, shall escape me. Oh ! draw near,
“ Receive my dying breath, thou art most dear
“ Still to this bleeding bosom.—I confess
“ ’Twas not a generous act—but—once more press
“ This form in those loved arms. To clear my fame,
“ From the foul stigma of abandoned shame,

“ Is not allowed me, yet there’s one can tell
“ My perfect innocence ;—I loved her well,
“ She shared my joy and sorrow,—it is she
“ Who oft hath charmed you with her minstrelsy,
“ Zelinda—she well knows the mighty power—
“ The cause—which led me to this fatal bower ;
“ My monitress in all things, and my friend,
“ Her fealty only with her life can end !—
“ I can no more—Alfonzo—husband—speak—
“ My eyes grow dim—but if thou would’st not break
“ This heart before its time, oh ! only say
“ That you still love me—and this fragile clay
“ Will rest in quiet.—Father ! where art thou ?—
“ Thou hast not left me ?—Ah ! I feel thee now,
“ But see thee not—yet are my eyes unclosed—
“ Is this to die ?—is this to be reposed
“ In the cold arms of death ?—a fond embrace,
“ On the last scion of thy withered race,
“ Again bestow !—May Heaven thine age defend,
“ My sole—my earliest—my latest friend !
“ Farewell Alfonzo ! we shall meet above,
“ No jealous fears can mar our perfect love
“ In that bless’d realm—but oh ! I faint—I die—
“ Father—receive your child’s last breath !”—her eye

Glazed as he viewed it—on Almanza's breast,
Her gentle spirit found eternal rest !

The arm which had sustained her now sunk down,
Stiffened and cold,—the springs of life o'erthrown ;—
No hand had slain him, no rude steel had sought
The fate this burden of affliction brought,
Yet there he lay, heart-broken, not one sigh
Told of his bosom's bitter agony ;
Death brought a quick relief for all his woes,
But sent him,—lorn,—without a friend to close
His eyes, or watch the flickering flame expire,
Into a timeless grave.—Daughter and Sire,
At the same moment, winged their brilliant flight
To cloudless regions of Eternal light.

Aghast the murderer stood, and the strained eye
Glared wildly round, or fixed on vacancy
Its thrilling gaze, but, as it travelled, caught
The shadow of a distant form, which wrought
His tortured soul to madness ; a shrill scream
(Whilst memory flashed on him like a dream)
Burst from his lips, “ Oh ! human fiend ” he cried,
“ Even in death she is my promised bride !

“ Oh ! artful sorceress—devil—led by thee
“ Into a maze of guilt and misery,
“ And cursed by my own deed ;—what fiendish power
“ Seduced my heart, and in an evil hour
“ Resigned me to thy counsels ?—Hell had blushed
“ To owe so vile a being,—thou hast crushed
“ All peace for ever, all my hopes of bliss,
“ All comfort in the next world, and in this !”
His trembling hand more firmly grasped the blade,
Which the bright hue of guiltless blood displayed,
And raising it in air, unshrinking, pressed
Th’ empurpled weapon deep within his breast.
A frightful laugh distorted every trait
Of that fine countenance, and tore away
All vestiges of former grace, and set
The seal of madness on his forehead ;—yet
Speech was allowed him,—with imperfect breath,
Quivering and struggling in the grasp of Death,
“ How I escape thy malice, fiend !” he cried
“ Thou canst not tear me from the grave,—nor pride
“ Thyself upon thy triumph,—cursed,—disgraced,—
“ Exiled from human friendship, may you waste
“ Your days in unavailing bitterness
“ Of heart,—but oh ! this lagging pulse grows less ;

“ Hell yawns around me,—Isabella, stay !—

“ But kindred Angels bear her soul away,

“ She does not hear my pray’r—Oh ! smile again—

“ Proclaim my pardon—ease this scorching pain—

“ She’s gone for ever !—Oh ! I sink—the light

“ Of Heaven is changed to dark—dark—endless—night !”

* * * * *

There stood a figure on the rock’s steep height,

One scarcely human, and the steady light

Shewed the pale features like a haggard corse ;

The cheek was tinged with horror and remorse,

The eye flashed frenzy, and the dark hair stream’d

Around its face ; this dubious figure seemed

The Demon of Destruction, or the fiend

Who breathes in pestilence and rides the wind.

She spoke, “ Oh ! wretch,” she cried, “ oh most accursed !

“ Of human acts the blackest and the worst !

“ Tortured—and Hell my well-earned recompence

“ For deeds so dark,—and murdered innocence

“ My crime, what hope is left for one so foul,

“ So stained—to save this deeply-guilty soul ?

“ Life is a curse, and death the speedy path

“ To Sin’s reward, and Heaven’s unceasing wrath !”

There was a heavy splash—the waters broke
Over a form of guilt, a sound which spoke
Horror to living hearts—the death-shriek rose
Over the deep, and, murmuring to its close,
Gurgled, and swelled again upon the air;
Then sunk—and death's chill gloom alone reigned there.

* * * * *

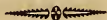
A blackened corse—without a bier—a grave—
Zelinda's body floated down the wave.

* * * * *

LINES

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE,

(*Written when the Author was Twelve Years old.*)



MOURN for our hopes destroyed ! Britannia weep !
The Princess sinks to everlasting sleep,
For death, with stern and unrelenting hand,
Hath snatched away the pride of British land !
Thousands—nay millions—will her death deplore,
The generous benefactress of the poor,
Oh ! we have lost our country's hope and heir,
Our country's treasure, and our country's care.
But hapless Coburg ! who can paint *thy* grief ?
Thy woes, alas ! admit of no relief,
Thy peerless wife and infant son are gone,
And low'ring clouds o'erspread thy rising Sun !
Heaven gives and takes away, shall *we* repine ?
Heaven lent a flower then snatched it in its prime.
But, though a corse in the cold grave she lies,
She is not dead, she lives beyond the skies ;
Resigned and patient she renounced this throne,
But Heaven designed for her a better crown.

Who will not mourn ? who will not heave the sigh ?
 Who will not thus in tender accents cry ?
 Oh ! peerless Princess, thy pure spirit's fled,
 And thou art numbered now amongst the dead ;
 Those beauteous eyes shall never open more,
 Until they open on that happy shore
 Where sorrows never come, nor pains intrude,
 Nor anguish shall thy tender heart corrode ;
 Where, with thy golden harp, thy gentle voice
 Shall in sweet strains of melody rejoice,
 Where, clad in robes of pure and dazling light,
 Whose brightness serves to render thee more bright,
 Where free from Sin, and all her wicked ways,
 There thou shalt sing the great Eternal's praise !

Nov. 1817.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

(Written at the same Age.)



A BLOOMING rose, with "blushing honours" crowned,
 Sent forth unrivalled sweetness on the air,
 The gentle zephyr scatter'd it around,
 The unequalled fragrance soon became renowned,
 The rose's fame resounded far and near.

A modest blush o'erspread the tender flower,
 It blossom'd in the morn, and flourished fair,
 But scarcely yet had seen the noon-tide hour,
 When ah ! a plundering thief, with potent power,
 Snatched up the rose and left us to despair.

Torn from its parent-stem, and native soil,
 The lovely flower withered and decay'd ;
 The root transplanted to a better soil,
 Its tender growth no plunderer now can spoil,
 It blooms and flourishes no more to fade.

So CHARLOTTE lived, but oh, relentless fate
 Blighted our hopes, and tore in haste away
 What was our country's boast and pride so late,
 For, like the rose, though beautiful and great,
 She budded—bloomed—and withered—in a day !

TO THE EVENING STAR.

(Written at Fourteen.)



HAIL! to thy clear and glorious ray,
 Fair Queen of a Celestial band,
 Though evening half obscures the day
 Thy beams throw brightness o'er the land.

Terrestrial objects fainter grow,
 Enveloped in a deeper shade,
 But thou in Majesty dost glow,
 In light and purity array'd.

Thine holy influence spreads a calm
 Upon the darkened face of night,
 And sheds o'er riven hearts a balm,
 A peace approaching to delight.

Cloud after cloud now slowly sweeps,
 And wraps in deep'ning gloom the day,
 And the damp vapour onward creeps,
 But nought obscures thy cloudless ray!

TO A GENTLEMAN,

In Answer to some Verses on Black and Blue Eyes.

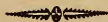
—❖—

HAVING read your opinion of black eyes and blue,
 (Excuse my presumption in answering you)
 And *seen* what you say on both sides of the case,
 That one has most brilliance, the other most grace

I take up my pen with *true-woman* intention,
 To lengthen the cause by a little contention.
 That black orbs are charming I've ever confessed,
 Nor quit an opinion so often expressed,
 For dear are the glances from dark rolling eyes,
 And their eloquence tells us what language denies ;
 But have you not marked the spirit which gleams
 In an eye of pure azure, where innocence beams ?
 Oh ! a *blue* orb will lull the soul to its rest,
 But *black* ones drive quiet away from the breast,
 Yet I love a dark eye, its brilliant expression
 Will fix in the bosom a lasting impression,
 The spirit that darts in those glances of fire
 Will light up a flame that can never expire ;
 'Tis a soul in itself, and the joy it imparts
 Gives rapture to bliss and makes Heav'n in our hearts.
 But a thousand mild beauties will peep to the view
 In the tremulous glance of a languishing *blue*,
 Which charms as it timidly shrinks from the gaze,
 Whilst a *black* one confounds by the fire of its rays ;
 Yet to each hath the heart oft in extacy bounded,
 And a *blue* eye has heal'd where a *black* one has wounded.

April, 1821.

TO A FRIEND IN AMERICA.



Why did you cross the briny wave ?
Why did you leave these happy bowers ?
The broad Atlantic does not lave
So bright—so blest a land as ours !
Oh ! you may search the wide world round,
But there is ne'er a spot of ground
More capable of yielding bliss,
More fair—more beautiful than this !

Did not one sigh—one little sigh
Escape your bosom, as you passed
Upon the mirror of the sky,
And caught one look,—(perhaps the last
That you may catch of England's shore) ?
And did you fondly linger o'er
Some loved remembrance,—image,—shade,—
By memory faithfully pourtrayed ?

Oh, yes, you did, for well I know
Your breast,—angelic though it be,
And pure,—is not exempt from woe,
But nurses fruitless misery ;
There is a secret, hidden grief,
Which can't, or will not, find relief,
And the cypress chaplet, even now,
Hangs o'er thy fair and heavenly brow.

But why forsake this lovely land?
 (More lovely that it is our own)
 Thinkest thou that a foreign strand
 Can banish sorrow from her throne?
 Oh! no, it is thine own pure breast
 Which cherisheth the foe to rest,
 And Melancholy's poisoned dart,
 Has fixed the venom in thy heart.
 Believe me, there is not an isle,
 In the vast universal space,
 Where Virtue may more safely smile,
 And sorrow find a resting-place.
 Then why desert these happy shores
 Where Heaven its choicest blessing pours?
 Oh! blest are they whose envied lot
 Has *fixed* them on this favoured spot!
 Why did you cross the briny wave?
 Why did you leave these happy bowers?
 The broad Atlantic does not lave
 So bright—so blest a land as ours.
 Oh you may search the wide world round,
 But there is ne'er a spot of ground,
 More capable of yielding bliss,
 More fair—more beautiful than this!

January 1822.

CARDIFF CASTLE.

A DRAMATIC, HISTORICAL SKETCH.

By M. G. LEWIS.

INTRODUCTION.

IN attempting to dramatize events which occurred in so distant a period as that of the reign of Henry the First, an era (in comparison with later reigns) involved in so much obscurity, many difficulties are to be overcome and many deficiencies to be supplied; even in the subject which the Author has chosen there is no incident, imagination must do all, for though history expresses that Robert Duke of Normandy, and William, Earl of Mortaign, were condemned to perpetual imprisonment in the Castle of Cardiff, it leave us in ignorance as to what further might have occurred: that Robert ended his days there is certain, and from the expression "*perpetual*"

imprisonment," it is natural to conclude that William of Mortaign died there also.*

* History certainly does mention the report that, during the imprisonment of the Duke in the Castle of Cardiff, his eyes were burnt out by brazen balls, at the command of his most unnatural brother; but, being given as a *report only*, and not evidenced by substantial authority, it is more gratifying to human nature to *believe* the contrary. The tower in which the Duke was confined, at the right of the outer gate, is still standing, but in a state of complete decay; it is roofless and shattered, whilst the thick and ponderous walls alone give an idea of its former strength and magnitude; the very dungeon, in which the wretched monarch ended a life of vicissitude and misery, is still pointed out to the observant traveller, the door is exceedingly low, and the whole apartment, even allowing for the delapidation and disparagement which the neglect of centuries must have occasioned, still bears the appearance of having been a cheerless and melancholy abode. This tower, and the remains of a fine magazine, form prominent features in the antiquities of Cardiff Castle, whilst they display a striking contrast to the more modern elegance and beauty of its other buildings. There is, or was, a subterranean passage leading from the Castle to the open country, which, in the time of the Welch wars, must have been of great service to the inhabitants of

In a subject so barren, it was necessary to introduce characters and events that may never have existed, and to give to those persons, with whom history furnishes us, dispositions and qualities, perhaps, very different from those which they really possessed; the daughter of Mortaign, and the keepers, Fitzmaurice and Fitzjames, are the only fictitious persons in the piece, the others are real; but, if I have brought them forward under a new aspect, it must be remembered that I was necessitated to do so for the convenience of Dramatic business. The circum-

Cardiff; it ran beneath the town, under the river, and at length terminated at the top of Llechwydd hill, about three miles distant; this passage has since been destroyed, owing to the river having broken into it; it is choked up with rubbish, and is now impassable, or considered so, for no one will risk exploring it. The Castle and the town are equally worthy of observation, the one for its beauties and antiquities, the other for its neatness and regularity. The pleasure-grounds of the former are laid out with an elegance and liberality which do credit to the taste of the noble owner: altogether, Cardiff is one of the prettiest places in Wales.

stances, too, may appear crowded, I own that they are so, for, to bring the occurrences of years into the compass of a night and day, and yet to make them appear smooth, connected, and natural, must be the talent of an older head and a more experienced hand; and, if I have changed the position of events, and brought my characters into new and unauthenticated situations, it is but using the privilege of established writers, therefore

“ I only sin in common with my betters.”

I will not say that I am regardless of the public approbation, for who, if that were the case, would write at all? It is true I cannot expect strangers to pass over the errors of my little work with the same lenity that my friends will, but, though I am anxious for the good-will and esteem of the Public, and grateful for the encouragement given to a former production, I will say, boldly and candidly, that the approba-

tion of my Patron, should I be so fortunate as to obtain it, and of the few kind and noble friends who have condescended to patronize a very young Author, will be to me a source of higher gratification than any other circumstances my humble work can possibly produce.

M. G. L.

CHARACTERS IN THE DRAMA.

Henry the First, *King of England.*

Robert, Duke of Normandy, *elder brother to* } *Prisoners in*
the King, and William, Earl of Mortaign, } *Cardiff Castle.*

Robert, Earl of Gloucester, *natural son to King Henry the First.*

Robert Fitzhamon, *Lord of Glamorgan, and Governor of the*
Castle.

Fitzmaurice, } *Keepers of the Cells.*
Fitzjames, }

Adelaide de Mortaign, *daughter to the Earl.*

Maud, *daughter to Robert Fitzhamon.*

Guards, Soldiers, Attendants, &c.

CARDIFF CASTLE.*

SCENE I.—TIME, NIGHT.

A dark court-yard without the building in which the Duke of Normandy and the Earl of Mortaign are confined ; a few fir trees growing before the prison ; the rays of the moon softening the landscape and falling indistinctly upon the ivied walls. Centinels pacing at a distance.

Enter FITZMAURICE and FITZJAMES, from different doors.

FITZMAURICE.

HOW fares the royal prisoner ?

* The ancient name of which was Y Tŷ Gwyn ar Daf, or, The White House upon the River Taf.

FITZJAMES.

Why well,

Well as in such calamity man can fare ;
He sleeps and looks well, yet he sometimes sighs,
And, gazing on his narrow prison-house,
His searching eye would seem to ask the cause
Why, in this land of luxury and ease,
So mean provision should be found for royalty.

FITZMAURICE.

Unhappy prince! in all things powerful,
Save that in which he should indeed be great,
His kingdom and his rights : his dignities,
His crown, his people's faith, almost his life,
Torn from his grasp—with fiendish malice torn—
And by a brother's hand !—

FITZJAMES.

Oh ! hush, your zeal,
Well-meant and noble in itself, may yet
But lead you into danger, and, perhaps,
Cause fresh injustice to the hapless duke :
Fitzhamon is th' adherent of the king,
Let him but guess you've not a marble heart,—
Shew but the smallest feeling for his sorrows,—

And punishment on both must surely follow.
Remember, when the duke was first brought hither,
The governor appointed you his guard,
You bowed, and looked upon the prince, and sighed,
Fitzhamon marked that sigh, and, turning, bade
Me take the place he deemed you so unfit for.
That raised suspicion, should he now behold
Your lamentations for his fate, or hear
Your free speech of the king, would he not guess
Your power would second your commiseration?

FITZMAURICE.

I thank you for your caution, it was needful.

FITZJAMES.

Think not that *I* can view his sorrows without pity,
So much I feel for him that I have promised,
At his most eloquent entreaty, to procure
(Though without your aid I cannot) for one hour
The interdicted presence of his friend,
The Earl of Mortaign, and your charge: to-night,
When all shall sleep besides, will you permit
Your prisoner to receive him?

FITZMAURICE.

Willingly!

And blest that any act of mine hath power
To cheer his lorn and melancholy fate.

FITZJAMES.

It is not far from midnight now. —(*Looking out.*)—What
form,

What moving figure glides amongst the trees
And flies with such impatience to this spot ?
Is it a woman ? No, no female step
Has ever dared to enter these stern regions,
Fear would repel it ; dungeons, tortures, chains,
Have small temptations for the gentler sex.

Enter ADELAIDE DE MORTAIGN.

ADELAIDE.

Oh ! frown not—do not drive me back—nor say
“ You pass not further.” I’ve a talisman
Will ope your hearts to mercy ; did you know
The pangs I have endured, the agonies
This heart hath felt,—the miles I’ve walked on foot,
How I have fed on charity, and slept
At night upon the stones, till my poor frame,
Worn by the mighty pressure of my woes

And poverty, had almost found its grave,
And all to seek my father, you would not
Expel me from his presence.—Let me pass,
I know he's here—the king—(Oh heaven forgive
The malediction rising on my lips !)
The king has willed it so,—the king—whose word
None disobey who value life and fortune !

FITZJAMES.

Poor thing ! her senses wander.

ADELAIDE.

Oh ! no, no,

Would that they did so ! I might then forget
Such scenes as wind my brain to agony
Even in recollection ! Look at me !
Do you not know me ? but—alas ! how should you ?
I scarcely know myself—there was a time
When they did call me Adelaide De Mortaign,
Now I am nothing, save a proper mark
For the barbed arrows of misfortune !

FITZMAURICE.

If,

As you say, you are Adelaide De Mortaign,
How came you hither ? by what wondrous chance

Were these gates opened for you ? none are here
Admitted, save the few who ne'er return.

ADELAIDE.

Oh ! do not say so, lest the piercing words
Should kill me in your presence ; I am one
Who cannot smile at woe as formerly,
My heart's so full of sorrow—I could *die*
But that there's one on earth I must not quit,
My father.—Oh ! that name has been my stay
Through hardships manifold and dire,—that name
The charm which drew me hither ; should you now
Prevent my purpose, and refuse t'admit me
To an unhappy parent's cell of woe,
How will you answer for that deed to him
Who one day will require the great account
Of actions done on earth?—Here on my knee—(*Kneeling.*)
Let me entreat compassion,—let me prevail
O'er hearts long used to scenes of cruelty,
For as you deal with others in this world,
So will your judges deal with you hereafter.
Give me admission. (*Rising.*)

FITZMAURICE. (*To Fitzjames.*)

How would you advise ?

There's something awful in her look and voice,
I dare not disobey her.

FITZJAMES.

Let her pass

But see no jealous eye observes your conduct.

FITZMAURICE. (*To Adelaide.*)

Sweet maid, you wrong me if you think my heart
Inured to acts of cruelty; not one,
Of many I have served within these walls,
Has e'er accused me of barbarity
In principle or action, nor shall you :
Your father's cell is opened at your bidding.

[*Exit into the tower.*]

ADELAIDE. (*Following.*)

A thousand blessings wait on all thy steps.

SCENE II.

A dark and gloomy apartment in which the Duke of Normandy is imprisoned, the moon-beams entering through the high, grated windows, a solitary lamp burning on a rudely-formed table, and a couch of straw in one corner.

The DUKE. (After a pause.)

Oh! vain, delusive world! formed to create

Sorrows more deep and lasting than thy joys,
I now detest thee ;—for thou hast torn from me
All in this life worth living for,—my crown,
My birth-right, children, wife, my brother's love,
My subjects' confidence, my name, and all
That men do value highly ; e'en my life
May soon be called for,—well ! the fiends shall have
'Tis useless now and may be so for ever ;
Yet it is hard to sink into the tomb
Unpitied, unremembered ; to depart
Like one who ne'er had made a friend on earth,—
Like a base dog to die and be forgotten,
No eye to weep for me, no heart to mourn,
And not a tongue to tell where I am laid !
Oh mad ambition ! these are all thy works,
Ambition raised my brother's hand against me,
Ambition poured that poison o'er his heart
Which turned fraternal love to deadliest hate,
And nipped each springing bud of latent virtue.
Oh Henry ! brother,—king—whate'er thou art,
(Cursed in thy exaltation) may you yet
Repent ere 'tis too late ; the time must come
When royalty no longer will avail you,
When, stripped of outward splendour, the stern eye

Of an Almighty Judge will search thy soul,
Pierce the most dark recesses of thy thought,
And view thee as thou art.—Oh ! may that eye
Never behold in thee a fratricide !—

(Rising and coming forward.)

'Tis near the hour when my humane guard
Has promised to conduct me to the cell
Of my unhappy friend, William of Mortaign.
Oh cruel king, was't not enough that thou
Shouldst sacrifice a brother to thy malice,
But thou must also take this nobleman,
Brave, hospitable, generous, and aged,
Whose stainless life might serve thee for a model,
To be another victim to thy hate ?
Shame on the act which could condemn a man,
So gallant as the earl, to a long life
Of slavery and ignominious chains !

Enter FITZJAMES.

FITZJAMES.

Your Royal Highness is at liberty,

Now that my Lord Fitzhamon is at rest,
To follow to the apartment of the earl.

THE DUKE.

A prisoner's thanks are all I have to offer. [*Exit together.*]

SCENE III.

*The cell of the Earl of Mortaign, the same in appearance
as that of the Duke of Normandy; the Earl asleep
upon a miserable pallet in the corner.*

Enter FITZMAURICE and ADELAIDE.

FITZMAURICE.

Your father now is sleeping, there he lies,
'Twere pity to disturb him yet, for sleep
Has seldom deigned to visit his sad couch
Since this dark cell has held him.

ADELAIDE.

Heavenly powers
Prolong his slumbers, they are sweet; to wake
From blissful visions to a cheerless life
Must be indeed to taste excess of woe!
Yet I will feast my eyes with gazing on him,

Will watch each movement of his lips, and think
It forms a prayer for his hapless child !

*(Takes the lamp, approaches the pallet, and kneels
beside it.)*

Great God ! is this my father ? Oh how changed !
How wan and lifeless is his aspect now
Which late appeared so full of health and vigour !
His eye is sunk, his forehead silvered o'er
With the white hairs of sorrow, and his cheek
Is lustreless and pale ; all hue is gone
Save that of gnawing anguish, and no sign
But the faint heaving of his breast, affords
The slightest indication of existence !

*(Places the lamp on the floor and bends over him in
silence ; the Earl moves, and Adelaide retreats into
the shade.*

ADELAIDE. *(To Fitzmaurice.)*

Oh ! my kind friend, apprise him of my presence,
But do it gently, lest the welcome news
Incautiously delivered, should destroy
The pleasure 'tis intended to convey.

MORTAIGN. *(Rising and supporting himself on his arm.)*

Alas ! 'twas but a dream which now has vanished,

So vanish all my schemes of earthly bliss,
All hope of liberation ! Oh ! I thought
A smiling cherub ope'd my prison-doors,
And pointing to the sky, bade me prepare
For a long union with departed friends ;
When, suddenly, a form supremely bright
Appeared in heaven, which, by degrees, assumed
My daughter's countenance, and, smiling, said,
“ Father, we part no more ! ” I sprung to clasp
The lovely shadow in my arms—and woke !
Omnipotence ! to thy decrees I bow
In all things, for thou dost most rightly judge ;
Yet, should it be thy will to take me hence,
From a long life of misery and woe,
To snatch me from my sorrows and disgrace,
Oh ! how my heart shall bless the gracious deed !—
My child ! my child !—never to meet again,
Never to view that sweet angelic face
Till death shall seal the awful union,—
Heaven, 'tis too much !—

FITZMAURICE.

My Lord Mortaign be calm,
No sorrows but admit amelioration :

A stranger now without would fain approach,
He says he bears intelligence, but what
I know not.

MORTAIGN.

Oh! admit him, my kind guard,
Let me behold him—let me know the worst—
Those speaking looks assure me that some change—
Some unexpected ill—

FITZMAURICE.

Oh! no, your fears
Are groundless, joyful are the news he brings;
Not from the king,—not hopes of liberation,
But your child—

MORTAIGN.

Where is she?

ADELAIDE. (*Springing forward.*)

Father, at your feet!

(*Fitzmaurice retires.*)

MORTAIGN. (*Sinking on the neck of his daughter.*)

Oh God, thy ways are wonderful! thy will
Never to be arraigned; my Adelaide,
My only joy that's left, what, art thou come
To cheer the last sad moments of existence?

To soothe thy father's dying hour, and shed
A balm upon his miserable couch ?
Unhappy child, what trials are reserved,
What mighty sorrows still remain for you !
How will thy gentleness support the task
Of following thy parent to the grave,
(The only one that's left to follow him)
Then linger out a life of misery
Exiled from home and comfort ?

ADELAIDE.

Oh ! forbear

To paint a scene so harrowing to my soul,
Nor conjure up those phantoms to distress
This moment of re-union. Father, our griefs,
Like vapours in an April sky, will soon
Dissolve and pass away ; they are not meant
To last us through eternity, to die
In peace with God and Man, is to escape
All that has ever tinged our days with sorrow,
To fly the malice of our foes, and find
A heavenly balm for every earthly care.

MORTAIGN.

Sweet monitress, thy words impart new joy,

New life they cannot, for the hand of death
Already is upon me.—Adelaide,
Receive thy father's blessing, it is all
William of Mortaign can bequeath to thee :
Even his name dies with him, and his child,
Friendless and destitute, must now depend
On strangers' pity for those benefits
Her sire has oft bestowed on others !

ADELAIDE.

Never !

Oh ! I can not outlive thee—for my heart,
Already broken, was not made to bear
Its mighty woes with calmness. No, my sire !
There is but one tie binds me to this earth,
That severed, nought can bribe me to remain
In a vile world of treachery and sorrow,
To be the sport of cruelty, the mark
Of every one's contempt !—But should my life,
Against my inclination be preserved,
The God who has sustained us hitherto
Will not desert me in my hour of peril !

Enter FITZMAURICE.

My Lord, the Duke of Normandy is here,
(Permitted through the kindness of his keeper)
And earnestly entreats an interview ;
I pray you see him quickly, and detain
His Royal Highness but a little while,
For, should my Lord Fitzhamon be informed
Of the indulgence we have granted you,
Not we alone should be the sufferers,
But you would also feel the mighty wrath
Of the offended favourite.

MORTAIGN.

'Thanks ! thanks !

A thousand thanks and more !—Oh lead him hither—
My master !—Once more at his feet I'll kiss
The hand which raised me when it had the power,
And did not quit its servant in adversity.

[*Exit Fitzmaurice.*

Enter the DUKE OF NORMANDY—Mortaign springs forward, and falls at the feet of the Duke—Robert raises him.

THE DUKE.

Kneel not to me, my old, my faithful friend,
I am not now a King, nor aught that you
Or any nobleman should bend the knee to ;
Alas ! I'm but a cruel brother's football
Which moves but as he moves it.—I am come,
Not to receive that homage which to me
Must seem as mockery, but to behold
My youth's companion, my valued friend,
My partner in misfortunes, and the same
Whom my distresses have conspired to plunge
Deep in affliction—oh ! my Lord Mortaign
I almost blush to look at you, to think
That friendship and fidelity to *me*
Have been the ground-work of your miseries,
Is still more harrowing to my soul than aught
My brother can invent to torture me !

MORTAIGN.

Dear Prince ! talk not of that, could I preserve
Your liberty by sacrificing mine,
This cell would seem to me a Paradise ;
But to look round and know that the same walls
Which hold me here, fettered in slavish chains,

Confine my *master*, and the rightful heir
Of this vast kingdom, yields a pang more sharp
Than aught that slav'ry can inflict besides ;
For oh ! these hoary locks—this shackled arm,
These dungeons, bars, and cautious fastenings,
Prevent the ardent purpose of my soul,
To loose thy fetters, Prince, and set thee free !
To lead thee to thy birth-right, England's crown,
And trace thy claim to it with my sword's point !

THE DUKE.

There spoke Earl William's soul ! Oh ! that you ne'er
Had exercised that energy of mind
To serve a wretched Prince, it has involved
Both you and yours in misfortune ; *I*
Am only *one* to suffer, *you* are *many*,
For many feel in your sufferings
And groan beneath your sorrows ; children, friends,
Lament your fate, but *I* am 'reft of all
That could give poignancy to human woe,
Or zest to human pleasure !—Oh, Mortaign,
The world has little left in it for me
Of either joy or sorrow, Fate has done
Its best and worst for me, for one short hour

It gave a dream of happiness, but, ere
That dream could grow into reality,
The vision fled from my deluded sight.
But the disease hath also brought its cure,
If it hath shocked the basis of my joys,
And rudely snatched the olive from my breast ;
If it hath dulled my life-star, torn away
All hope of future peace, clouded for ever
My once bright prospects, it hath also stunned
My sense of anguish so that I shall feel
The pangs of grief no more ; the heart, once full
Of bitter sorrow, has not *room* for more,
It can but feel to its extremity
And so doth mine ; all woes that now may come
Pass lightly, for no human power can bring
Sorrows to equal those which I have felt ;
And as for happiness—it is a star
That ne'er again will throw its beams on me !

*(Mortaign sinks upon a chair, the Duke and Adelaide
rush towards him.)*

THE DUKE.

My Lord you're ill—your changing cheek—your eye
Full of unusual fire,—your trembling frame
Betray indisposition !

MORTAIGN.

Oh ! my liege,
Thy servant soon must leave thee here alone,
I feel the hour of separation nigh,
My child—my Adelaide—oh ! gracious Prince—
By my long-tried and faithful services
I do implore thee,—should'st thou e'er become
Invested with thy rights and royalty,—
I do entreat thee by thy generous nature,
By the firm friendship that hath grown between us,
Sometimes to recollect that Mortaign's child,
No longer has a single friend on earth ;
Her only guardians innocence and heaven,
Her only stay th' Almighty Power above us !

ADELAIDE.

And are not these sufficient ? Oh ! there's an eye,
All-seeing though unseen, that ne'er deserts
The meanest living object.

THE DUKE.

Hear my vow
Sworn on the sacred Altar of my God,
My oath pledged by that God's high Sanctuary,
My faith—my honour—all that men can swear by,
I give to thee as a sincere assurance,

That, should these 'prisoned limbs e'er bear the weight
Of regal splendour, I will not forget
The unprotected daughter of my friend !

MORTAIGN.

Thanks !—but my breath grows weak,—my lips refuse
To speak the grateful feelings of my heart ;
One short, one last adieu,—my Adelaide
Draw near, and thou, oh Prince, approach me also ;
Oh thus to view my child,—my King,—at once,
To look upon them both, and yet to know
That I am still on earth, is scarcely credible.
Oh ! 'twas too much,—my feeble frame could not
Support the wond'rous change,—yet to be blest,
In my last moments, with the blissful sight
Of the two dearest objects on this earth,
Is what I had not dared to hope.—Receive
An old man's blessing—now—I go for ever.

(His head sinks upon the shoulder of Adelaide, one hand clasps hers, the other retains that of the Duke of Normandy ; after a faint struggle he expires, whilst his daughter gazes in speechless agony upon the body. The Duke endeavours to lead her from the corpse.)

THE DUKE. (*Taking her hand.*)

Lady, forgivē the seeming unkind wish
That would remove thee from a form so dear,
Thy father's blest, and it would ill become
His daughter to repine at that kind fate
Which wafts him to a world of happiness.

ADELAIDE. (*Disengaging herself.*)

And can you bid me leave him, him who ne'er
Deserted *me* whilst life and strength were left ?
Oh! no, he is my sire, and the same grave
Which holds his dear remains shall cover me !
Nay do not thwart me, thus will I cling to him,
Thus hang upon his neck, and call his name,
Until his spirit shall descend for mine !

THE DUKE.

Now by the oath which I so lately pledged
Before the front of Heaven and to your sire,
I will not leave you to your sorrows thus ;
Adelaide, hear me ! on my bended knee (*Kneeling.*)
I do entreat you will return to reason ;
Those wild looks terrify, oh say what thoughts,
What direful thoughts are passing in your mind,
What strange imaginings hath thy heart formed,

That thou should'st gaze so frantically around ?

(Whilst the Duke is speaking, Robert Fitzhamon and guards rush in and seize him.)

ROBERT FITZHAMON.

It grieves me much, my Lord, to interrupt
Your pleasing conference with this fair dame,
What ! on your knees too ! I had hardly thought
That close confinement and hard dieting
Had taught your Royal Highness how to woo,
Or that the cell of Mortaign's ancient Earl
Would e'er become the midnight rendezvous
Of his fair daughter and her royal lover.

THE DUKE, *(rising and gazing on him with disdain.)*

You may insult me, for 'tis in your power,
Yet insults such as thine will make me feel
My consequence the more ; but if you think
To add to insult mortifying taunts,
Know that thy generous purpose will be foiled :
It is not you, Fitzhamon, can implant
The sting of self-contempt within this breast,
And teach me what it is to feel reproach ;
I must forget who, what, and whence you are,
Ere I can shrink, abashed, and mortified,
Into my own unworthiness.

FITZHAMON.

'Tis well

To brave it out so nobly, gallant prince,
Your heroism much becomes the cause.
Oh ! I have trusty servants, thus to form
A base conspiracy beneath my roof,
And lead my prisoners to the very gates
Of freedom ; (but they soon will be rewarded)
Yet, lest my entrance should appear too rude,
I fain would make my peace with this sweet maid,
And ask the hospitable host's forgiveness.

*(Approaching Adelaide and the body of Mortaign,
Adelaide springs between him and her father's
corpse.)*

ADELAIDE.

Stand off ye ruffian bands ! ye shall not touch
A single grey hair of this old man's head !
Ye shall not thus, with deeply tinctured hands,
Pollute the holy dead—Oh look at him,

*(Laying her hand on Fitzhamon's arm, who starts on
seeing that his prisoner is a corpse.)*

Look where he lies, murdered by your own act !
Look on those features—on those hoary locks,
Where sorrows deeply graven still disclose

A tale of suffering, and if thy heart
Be pierced not by the thought of thy dark deeds,
Oh! I will say thou'rt not of human mould!

FITZHAMON.

Woman! I will not hear thy furious madness!—
Guards, seize the body of the traitor Earl,
And bear it to the vaults beneath the castle.

*(Guards approach, Adelaide throws herself upon the
body of her father.)*

ADELAIDE.

Never! Oh never! or you take me with him,
They shall not part us—tigers! would you tear
The very life-strings from a breaking heart?
What! part us even in death?—for oh I feel
That many moments here are not allowed me.

*(Fitzhamon endeavours to drag her from the corpse,
she shrieks, the Duke rushes to her assistance,
Fitzhamon sounds a bugle, guards rush in.)*

FITZHAMON.

Secure the royal prisoner;—bear him hence;
Back to his dungeon let him be conveyed,
Where, left to solitary contemplation,
His haughty spirit may repent the haste
Which urged his fate's encreasing bitterness.

THE DUKE. (*As guards force him off.*)

Robert Fitzhamon, hear me ere I go,
Take—not my curse, though thou hast well deserved it,
I would not so far lose my views of Heaven
As breathe a curse against a fellow creature,—
But take my bitter hate,—my keen contempt,
My hopes of earthly care—the only harm
I wish thee is a long and deep repentance!

(*Soldiers force him off.—Fitzhamon seizes Adelaide.*)

FITZHAMON.

Guards, do your duty, bear the old man's corse
Whither I ordered you, myself will vouch
For the protection of his lovely daughter.

(*Soldiers take the body of Mortaign, and bear it off.*)

ADELAIDE. (*Struggling with Fitzhamon.*)

Release me, cruel monster, what art thou?
The minion of a fiend, and yet presume
To lay thy blood-stained hands on Mortaign's child!
Hence thou detestable—thou impious wretch,
The generous earth will furnish me a bed
Far from the guilty steps of wicked men,
And there will this weak body find repose,
Ay, *such* repose as thou can'st ne'er enjoy!

(*Breaks from Fitzhamon and rushes out.—Scene closes.*)

SCENE IV.

The outside of the Castle, an extensive lawn in front, a thick grove on each side, and high walls surrounding. Time, the break of day, the light just peeping through the opening clouds, but the principal part of the scene involved in the shade of twilight. The form of Adelaide extended, apparently insensible, upon the grass near the edge of the grove.

Enter ROBERT EARL OF GLOUCESTER, and MAUD,
daughter of Fitzhamon, meeting.

ROBERT.

Sweet Maud, this is an unexpected bliss !
What brings thee here so early, gentle dame ?
Has the lark rivalled me in thy affections,
Or were thy slumbers comfortless ? but yet
'Twere hard to think that innocence and beauty
Should e'er be driven from a restless couch,
To seek, in young Aurora's smiles, that peace
Which the dull god of sleep could not bestow.

MAUD.

And I would ask thee, free and courteous prince,

What mighty charm has lured *thy* steps abroad
At this unusual hour? 'tis quite as strange
Methinks, to meet thy Lordship here as me.

ROBERT.

If I should tell you, what would you suppose,
That I distrusted you, or wished to pry
Into the purpose of your morning ramble?

MAUD.

My Lord, I would not think you *could* distrust me,
Knowing no reason why you should do so,

ROBERT.

Well then, sweet Maud, as, from my chamber-window,
I took a short view of the twilight scenery,
I suddenly beheld a female form
Glide o'er the sward below; on the quick sense
Of love and lovers recognition strikes
With force incredible, I knew that form
And followed to protect its course from danger.

MAUD.

And now, my Lord, let me be quite as candid;
Oh! I have had such dreams—such frightful dreams—
And yet I know not what they were, but all
Tended to lure my footsteps to this spot;

I could not rest,—this scene was still before me,
And hither am I come, though by what power
Attracted, still remains to be disclosed.

(A low moan proceeds from Adelaide, they look round in apprehension.)

MAUD.

Oh Heaven, whence came that sound ? it surely was
A female voice, and now I can perceive,
Beneath the shadow of those myrtle boughs,
A woman's lifeless form ! Oh haste with me
To the assistance of the hapless stranger !

(They approach Adelaide and raise her from the ground, she gazes on them for some time in silence.)

ROBERT.

Lady, we wish to serve you, will you deign
To tell us how that wish may be effected ?

ADELAIDE. *(Shaking her head mournfully.)*

Why did you interrupt me ? why prevent
My blissful passage to Eternity ?
You cannot serve me if ye are human beings,
For none on earth can do so ; yet I think

(Looking at them alternately.)

You are not such, for, oh ! ye are kinder far,

And gentler, and more angel-like than any
This sinful world can possibly contain.

Say, are you spirits? for you smile so sweetly—
'Tis long since human forms have smiled on me,
Yet there was one who smiled—but he is gone
Into a life of happiness—and I
Cannot remain in this bad world without him.

MAUD.

Sweet stranger, do not think that all are bad,
Though many are so; you may yet possess
The treasures of affection, and enjoy
The soothing balm of friendship; I will try
To ease thy sorrows, you shall live with me
And know what 'tis to have one constant friend,
I will not let the sting of grief approach you,
Only assure me that you will endeavour
To be as free from care as I could wish you!

(Adelaide gazes on her for a moment, then sinks towards the earth but is supported by the Earl.)

MAUD.

Unhappy girl! how deep must be her sorrows,
How great the load of anguish which oppresses her!
Who can she be? her face and form disclose

High birth and breeding, but her noble air
Is strongly tinctured with insanity.

ROBERT.

Oh ! mark her care-worn brow, it plainly shews
That grief has overturned the power of Reason,
And dimmed the lamp of that once brilliant mind ;
Her pallid cheek,—her sunken eye,—her garb
Disordered,—all betray the soul's delirium.—
Maud shall I bear her hence ?

MAUD.

Ay, to the Castle,
Where I will tend her with a sister's care,
And, for the task so generously assumed,
I give thee prayers,—thanks,—gratitude,—and love.

ROBERT.

Such a reward might bribe me to a miracle !

[*Exeunt, Robert bearing Adelaide in his arms.*]

SCENE V.

A spacious and splendid apartment within the Castle. The King of England, in his robes, seated upon a chair of state. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, superbly attired, placed at his left hand. Nobles and attendants arranged

according to their quality. Minstrels in the back ground. Music.

Enter ROBERT FITZHAMON, brilliantly decorated, leading Maud arrayed in bridal splendour. HENRY quits his seat, approaches Maud, takes her hand, and leads her towards his chair.

HENRY.

Welcome ! sweet maid, thy sire's fidelity
And truth to trusts reposed in him, have earned
His lovely daughter an illustrious mate,
Whose youth and nobleness might recommend
Their owner to the fairest lady's favour ;
One who, if looks and sighs may be believed,
Has long since found an easy path to thine.
Fitzhamon, and my noble courtiers,
I pray you hear the solemn declaration
By which I give this young and blooming maid
In marriage to my son.

(Joining the hands of Maud and the Earl of Gloucester.)

FIRST NOBLE.

Hail ! happy pair,

May every rising dawn behold you blessed,
And each succeeding evening leave you so !

ROBERT FITZHAMON. (*Advancing and laying his hand on
his heart.*)

'Tis mine to speak of gratitude, but that
Words are too faint to image what I feel ;
I would say much, but when the heart is full
The tongue will oft refuse to tell its feelings ;
Yet here oh ! king, receive my firm allegiance,—
My thanks that thou should'st honour my poor dwelling
With thy most gracious presence, and believe
My life—my Castle—all I have are yours.

HENRY.

Enough—I know thy worth—let that suffice.
Minstrels proceed, this long-expected day
We must devote to joy and happiness.

(*Reseats himself, and places Maud at his right hand.
Minstrels advance.—Song.—At the conclusion a soft
but melancholy voice is heard without, repeating the
last stanza. The King looks towards the door.*)

*Enter ADELAIDE DE MORTAIGN, still singing, she gazes
stedfastly on the assembled company, and then advances
towards Maud.*

ADELAIDE.

How soon you left me, why did you run away ?
Why did you quit me ? there were none to smile,
Though many watched me, there were none to speak
So tenderly as you ; oh come again
Sweet lady, did I frighten you away ?
Nay then I will not weep,—I will not grieve,
I will do nothing that shall drive you from me.

MAUD. (*Taking her hand and attempting to lead her
away.*)

'Twas far from my intention to desert you,
I soon will come again ; in the mean time
Receive my firm assurance that no power
Shall e'er deprive you of my free protection.

HENRY. (*To Fitzhamon.*)

Who is the gentle maid ? her noble form
Betrays a noble birth and parentage,
And yet she seems unhappy, who could e'er
Implant a pang within that lovely breast ?

FITZHAMON.

My liege, she is the Earl of Mortaign's daughter.

HENRY. (*Starting.*)

Mortaign ? my prisoner !

FITZHAMON.

He who *once* was so,
But now is *not* ; last night the Earl expired.

HENRY.

Good heavens ! tell me how and by what means ?

FITZHAMON.

My liege, I've long had reason to suspect
The keepers of the cells not strictly true
To the trust lodged in them ; and many a night
I've watched about the prison, to discern
If there was treachery in aught they did.
Last night the cautious movements of Fitzmaurice
Roused apprehension of some deep-laid plot,
And rushing with an armed and faithful band
Into the dungeon of the Lord Mortaign,
I there beheld the Duke and this fair damsel ;
Th' unhappy prisoner was already dead,
His daughter hanging o'er his lifeless form
Aghast,—the Duke upon his knees before her.
How she came hither I cannot divine.

HENRY.

What said you ? Was the Duke upon his knees ?

FITZHAMON.

He was, but now is under close confinement.

HENRY.

Leave me, I fain would think on what you've said.

(*Muses.*)

MAUD. (*As if endeavouring to restrain Adelaide, who seems anxious to come forward.*)

Nay, come with me, I will not leave you more,
I will attend you night and day, nor quit
Your couch unless you wish it.

ADELAIDE. (*Still proceeding.*)

Let me pass,
Some one is calling me, do you not hear
A voice which bids me hasten from this scene?
But first I must salute the company,
And bid them farewell in a courteous manner.

(*Coming opposite Fitzhamon, she recognizes him and shrieks.*)

Oh ! bear him hence—oh take him from my sight,
He will devour me—'tis the raging wolf
That met me on the plain—I saw him tear
An old man's locks between his giant-teeth—
Beware—beware !—the monster's not yet tamed.

(*The Earl of Gloucester steps between her and Fitzhamon, who is beckoned out by an attendant.*)

ROBERT.

And is it *me* you honour with these titles?

ADELAIDE.

What ! are you come to save me from the beast,
The cruel beast of prey ? there he is now ;
See, how he glares at me !

ROBERT.

No, that's the king.

ADELAIDE.

The king ! oh horrid sound ! oh name accursed !
'Twas he that killed my sire, (ah ! hide me from him)
And made me what I am, deprived my youth
Of every joy the human heart can feel.—
Support this feeble frame a little while.—

(Sinks upon the arm of the Earl.)

Re-enter FITZHAMON, with a countenance much disturbed.

HENRY.

My trusty friend, what heavy news hast thou ?

FITZHAMON.

Oh ! ask me not, my liege, I must not tell
The tidings I have heard.

HENRY.

Is't of the Prince.

(Fitzhamon is silent.)

Oh ! quickly speak, or I shall die with anguish.

FITZHAMON.

Alas ! alas !

HENRY.

Oh God, my son is drowned !

FITZHAMON.

Sailing from Barfleur, the intemperate crew,
Neglectful of the precious freight on board,
Had yielded to intoxication's power,
The ship was wrecked.—

HENRY.

Did not the villains try
To save the prince's life ?—

FITZHAMON.

They did—they did !

A small boat was put forth, but the young prince,
Hearing his sister's cries on board the wreck,
Returned to save her ; eager to embrace
This prospect of redemption from their fate,
Numbers leaped in the boat ;—too weak to bear
The thronging crowd,—it sunk—and all—were drowned.

HENRY.

Oh God, then both are gone, and I am left
Alone upon the earth !

ADELAIDE. (*Creeping towards him.*)

Are you unhappy ?

I have long been so, and therefore pity you ;
My father's gone,—they say you murdered him,
But I can scarcely think it ;—if you did
This sudden woe might seem a judgment on you ;
I'll not believe it,—for you look so troubled :
I seldom see a guilty man unhappy.

HENRY. (*Much disturbed.*)

Oh take her hence, but see you use her well,
If she hath stabbed me 'twas with words of truth !

(*Faints, is borne off by his attendants.—Fitzhamon attempts to lead Adelaide away.*)

ADELAIDE. (*Rushing towards Maud.*)

Oh lady, save me from that cruel man,
He comes to lead this feeble frame to tortures !

(*Sinks at her feet, Maud and the Earl of Gloucester support her between them.*)

ADELAIDE.

Thank you,—you're very good,—I feel it all—

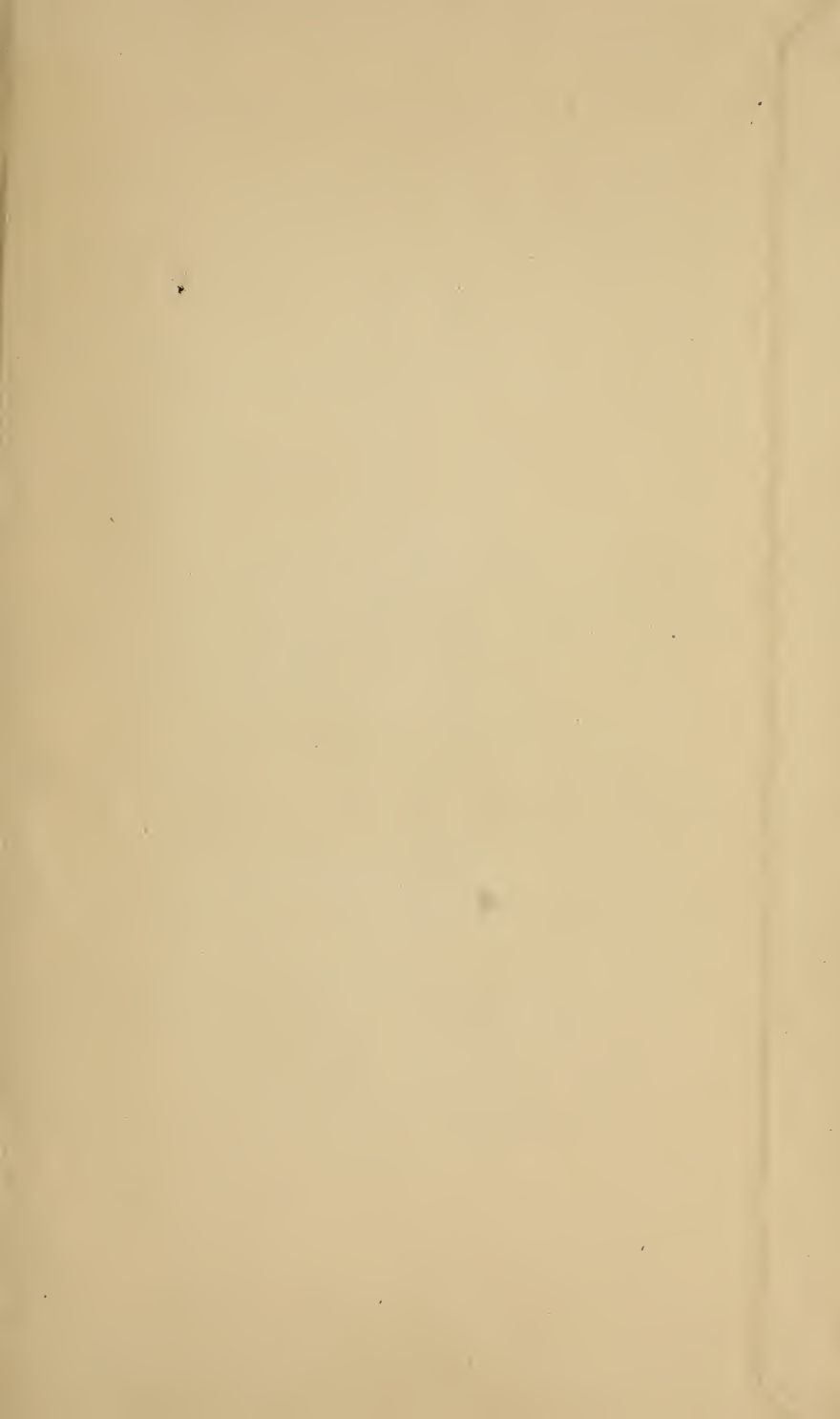
But shall not long survive to tell you so,
Oh! I'm collected now,—you need not fear me—
Hush!—there's soft music—and my father's voice
Calling his child away—Is the king dead?
Oh! no, no.—See you that smiling form,
Those beckoning hands, those wide-extended wings,
Ready to bear me to my sire's abode?
Farewell! I hope you will not long delay
The hour of meeting.—Oh! sweet friends,—farewell!
(Dies in the arms of the Earl of Gloucester.)

SCENE CLOSES.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2009

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